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–EDITORIAL OBSERVER–

An invigorated second term

From The New York Times:

Early Wednesday morning, as sleep-deprived supporters rallied for a final cheer, President Barack Obama concluded his re-election campaign with a promising glimpse at what the fight was all about: a second-term agenda that can make real progress on issues neglected in the first.

Without question, the president intends to build on and improve the significant accomplishments of the last four years, particularly the full implementation of health care reform and the use of government policy to keep the economy growing. But the president went beyond that in his victory speech and added some less familiar words to his policy vocabulary.

Children should live in a world that is not burdened by debt or weakened by inequality, he said, but also one "that isn't threatened by the destructive power of a warming planet." That suggests he knows he has an opportunity to address climate change with more vigor, going beyond auto-mileage standards and renewable-energy jobs to possibly advocating tougher carbon emissions standards.

The president also said he was looking forward to working with Republicans to fix the immigration system, giving him a chance to do more than promote the DREAM Act for young immigrants. He could lead the way to comprehensive reform that combines strong enforcement with a path to citizenship for immigrants already here. He also hinted that combating poverty might move higher on his priority list.

And he spoke of tax reform, an issue that will immediately begin to grow louder with the expiration of the Bush-era tax cuts at year's end. Obama won re-election on an unambiguous promise not to renew those cuts for incomes of $250,000 or more, and his supporters expect him to stick to that vow. In coming months, after he persuades Congress to keep taxes from rising on the middle class, he should push to restore a fair estate tax and raise the low capital gains rate to the level of ordinary income.

He even mentioned the need to fix a balloting system that left thousands of people standing in long lines to vote this week, a tantalizing hint that electoral reform might become a priority.

All these agenda items require the same ingredient: ending his standoffish attitude toward Congress and working closely with any leader or lawmaker willing to make real progress. That may be easier now that Senate Democrats (and their independent allies) have expanded their majority by two seats to 55, many of them filled with newcomers more liberal and feisty than their predecessors, most notably Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts.

The new Democratic caucus' first order of business should be a reform of the filibuster that prevents its routine abuse by Republicans, and the majority leader, Harry Reid, suggested Wednesday that he supported some modest changes. The newcomers, along with the White House, should forcefully advocate that he go as far as possible.

A newly energized Obama administration and Senate could have the effect of isolating the supply-side dead-enders in the House. John Boehner, the House speaker, announced Wednesday that nothing had changed; he and his caucus still oppose higher tax rates for the rich and still want to pursue Romney's defeated goal of raising revenue by lowering rates and cutting unspecified loopholes. Standing up to Republican recalcitrance on this and many other issues will require bringing to bear political pressure from the coalition that gave Obama a commanding victory in the Electoral College on Tuesday.

The president's victory was decisive, and many who didn't support him nonetheless told pollsters that they agreed with his positions on taxes, health care and immigration. He now needs to use the power that voters have given to him to enhance and broaden his agenda.

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U.S. politics changes for the better

Mariel Blake

America has changed.

There are periods when we grow as a society in degrees. Then there are times when we take great leaps forward. If you examine the history of our country back to the days of the first Spanish, English and French immigrants, you will see certain moments when our national dynamic shifted.

This week, we saw a moment when the America that has been growing and changing by degrees met with a moment when America made a hard turn on its path.

For years we have seen the browning of America. For years we have seen the tolerance and acceptance level of different religions, economic conditions, sexual orientations, political beliefs and ancestries grow in measured steps through the increase in one-on-one interactions and social media.

For years we have seen the steady progress of women, and felt a subtle shift in the rhythm of America.

This week, we saw several of these trends converge in a moment when it became evident that once again, America has changed.

The demographics of the exit polls tell an interesting story. President Obama's support came overwhelmingly from groups of people who are often described as disenfranchised:

- Those who make less than $50,000 per year;
- Those with some or no college education;
- Women;
- Young people;
- People of color.

These groups, who in the past have felt like their votes were taken for granted, for the first time in a long time, saw their votes carry weight that makes them get noticed.

People more "wonky" than me will be going over these numbers for months to come. These numbers tell me, though, that the reason why so many people were surprised about the outcome in this race ignored the numbers that had nothing to do with polls.

They want to say that it is because these communities were voting to keep their entitlements and "handouts," but that is just a denial of the real truth.

What people want is to no longer feel disenfranchised and marginalized.

What people want is for their voices to be included, not shouted down.

Recent data shows that women now outnumber men by a slim margin. More people live in cities. People of color now make up almost a third of the population. The average age is 37. Almost two thirds of us own homes, but there are more of us who have either never been married or are divorced than there are those of us who are married.

The fastest shrinking demographic is white men.

So many of the people who fit the demographics that elected President Obama are those in demographics that are seeing their numbers grow and also are becoming more politically active and savvy. They are truly looking to connect with candidates who have their concerns in mind. These are not one-issue voters.

They care about the economy but they also care about their place in our society. They want their social issues to be a part of the discussion. Our national identity is more about inclusion than assimilation. This is a vast switch from where we have been.

Those of us in groups that have been considered on the fringe or in the minority have found solidarity in our experiences in this country and are increasingly deciding we are no longer satisfied with trying to fit in and would rather have a seat at the table as our unique selves.

Women, the LGBT community and Latinos made great strides with this election. African Americans and young people reminded the political parties of the value of their support.

There is a lot of finger pointing from the Republican talking heads as to why their candidate lost. It seems they are slowly coming to realize it was not only whom they ran as candidates but also where those candidates stood on issues that are important to this growing voting power block.

I was struck by how few people of color were in the crowds for Mitt Romney toward the end of the campaign. It was like they no longer cared about even the illusion of inclusion, and instead decided to bank their future on their main demographic. What their campaign failed to take into consideration is that the issues that matter most to people right now stretch across racial and gender lines.

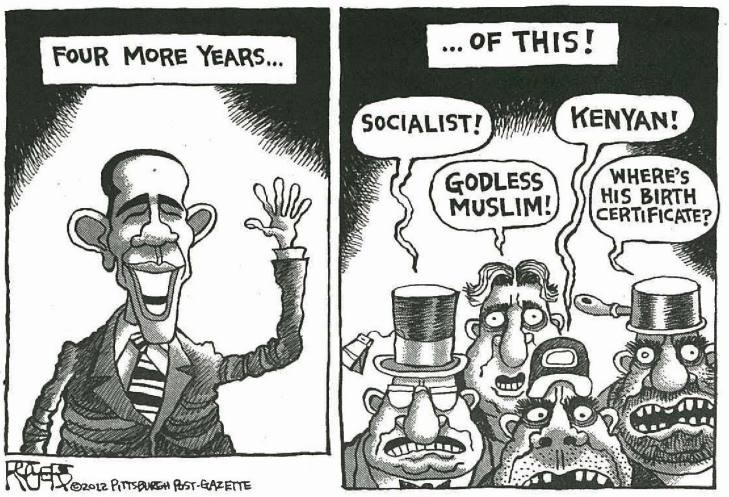
Those of us usually considered on the fringe are multifaceted and have learned a very powerful lesson after this election. When we band together to get our issues on the agenda, we force the conversation to change.

Hopefully, both parties have learned that you don't have to pander to us, but you do have to listen to us because we are not going away.

America has changed, and if history is any indication that is a very good thing.

Let's just hope we embrace the change in the spirit of cooperation and not segregation.

— Contact Daily News contributing columnist Mariel Blake at marielfblake@gmail.com.



to sleep. I can either take care of that in the bathroom, or I can do it here. If I do it here, then you can help me along, or not. I'd especially appreciate it if you could talk dirty while I jerk off, but it's your decision."

Talk about low pressure! Yeah, I learned a lot from that guy.

* * *

2) **Scripts and Lists.** I had one brief relationship last year with a gentleman who is really, really awesome -- but we have very different approaches to S&M. We had a hard time communicating about it... honestly, if he hadn't been such an awesome guy, I would probably have given up on the relationship after a couple nights together. We were great at having extensive theoretical conversations about sexuality, but when it came down to actually having sex with each other, things got puzzling. We had difficulty predicting, understanding, and initiating with each other.

I'm not sure what made it so hard. I think, mostly, we just brought really different assumptions to the table. I tend to take an "improvisational" approach to my encounters, whereas he tends to take a "scripted" approach. He's into doing stuff like rearranging the furniture, taking on specific roles (e.g. teacher and student), using costumes and props, and knowing exactly what will be said beforehand.

Me, I like going free-form. I talk to my partner about hard limits (things we absolutely don't want to do); I talk to him about things we really like; and we set a safeword. I'm usually okay with diving in from there. If he wants a more structured conversation, I'm glad to have one (and sometimes, especially when I'm dominant, I'll ask for more conversation myself). But generally, I like seeing how things go based on a very loose set of guidelines, and making minor adjustments during the encounter, then evaluating the situation afterwards.

One of the reasons I like doing this is that unexpected things happen. On the flip side, there's also more room for experiences that aren't very exciting. I think I'm more likely to have disjointed or confusing encounters than a lot of other BDSMers I know, although maybe I'm just falling prey to the bias of assuming other people are doing better than I am. And Scripty Guy in particular really doesn't like disjoint and confusion -- he likes knowing what's going to happen.

Late in the relationship, I suggested that we try going through a checklist. When people use these checklists, a lot of the time they just write their rating for each act, and give them to each other to read. What we did instead was go through the checklist together and discuss what we found hot, what was not, and whatever else came to mind.

This worked amazingly well -- it totally bridged our theoretical gap and it was a turn-on in itself! (Seriously, by the time we were done going through the whole list, I **could not wait** to have sex with that guy.) The conversation also helped me figure out the scripted vs. un-scripted difference between us.

We stopped seeing each other for unrelated reasons soon afterwards, and they were good reasons, but it seemed like a shame; I felt like we'd only just started figuring things out. I'm not sure how well our S&M styles would have ultimately meshed, but I was curious

to try. Oh well... win some, lose some.

* * *

3) **Transparent as Glass.** Very rarely, I'll end up with a BDSM partner where our brief in-the-moment communications -- you know, like groans, or physical shifts, or facial expressions, or even jokes -- function very well. We can get into intense, intimate S&M in a way that seems almost instinctive (although it helps future encounters if we talk it over and process what we did afterwards). This is really exciting when it happens, but I recognize it as unusual. A gift.

The person I'm about to write about is totally going to get a swelled head because I write about him so much, but he's such a good example, I have to. The first time I went home with him, I knew he wasn't in the public BDSM community. We'd had one really vague conversation about BDSM previously, and he'd read a small sample of my work. I didn't expect anything much.

He kissed me, and then I think he gave me some kind of mild signal like a bite on my shoulder. It was a gentle bite, by my standards. So I took matters into my own hands and removed my shirt, preparing to give him some feedback. He leaned back and said, "Whoa," and I thought, *Oh damn, I'm totally going too fast for him, he's probably not accustomed to a high degree of sexual directness,* so I said, "Sorry, is this okay?" and he laughed and kind of threw up his hands and said, "Sure."

That made me a tad nervous -- if me taking off my shirt surprised him, what else would surprise him? -- but I figured I'd see it through, see what happened. So I explained to him what kind of biting I really like, and showed where I like it on my back and my arms. I think I gave him a couple of other tips, too, but I honestly can't remember; it didn't take more than five minutes. I certainly didn't give him an exhaustive rundown of my preferences before I said, "Does that all make sense?" and he said "Yes," and put his hands on me.

Which is why it was so surprising that within a very short time, both of us were breathing hard and confused and maybe slightly dizzy and looking at each other with very wide eyes, and he was saying in an amazed tone: "I just -- I'm a little shocked. That was **really good**," and I was saying: "Yes. Yes it was."

It went like that for a while. He'd go for it, and then pull back, and I'd drag myself out of my BDSM headspace long enough to explain one or two ideas, or reassure him that I felt fine. And then he'd go for it again. And by the end of it, I was -- blazing.

Sometimes, it just works. You've never met this person before, you've talked for half an hour about something completely irrelevant like science fiction novels, yet it only takes five minutes of discussion about preferences and safewords, and then it just **works**. I don't know why, and I don't know how, but sometimes you find a partner who can just -- **read** you, like an open book -- or who seems as transparent as glass to you; or, if you're really lucky, both.

(But I write about this with some hesitation, and I'm putting it at the end of this post after two other examples for a reason: because I don't think it's the standard, and I don't think it

ought to be seen as standard. Especially because, paradoxically, this kind of instinctive connection will sometimes throw me off guard, make me unlikely to communicate when I probably ought to, because if he can read me that well -- it's so tempting to assume that "he just knows" everything. But of course he doesn't. I later had a couple rough moments with that particular guy, where I didn't tell him about boundaries that were actually pretty important, because I thought he could just tell -- and of course he couldn't always "just tell." Sometimes he could, but sometimes he couldn't.)

The overall moral of the story is this. Even with him, even with this guy, who totally blindsided me with his ability to read me despite the fact that he barely knew me: even with him, I had to be able to talk directly about what I wanted. Our connection was established because I was able to say, "Okay, that bite was a tad gentle, here's how I really like it, and here's what not to do with your teeth on me." **All my most extraordinary sexual connections have benefited from everyone involved taking ownership of their desire, and talking about it directly at least a little bit.**

I occasionally come across people who ask me how they can get their partners to do BDSM without talking about it directly. While I appreciate and sympathize with both their need to do BDSM, and their anxiety about talking about it -- I just can't get behind the premise of the question. The fantasy of a sexual relationship that is totally instinctive and perfect without any effort is just that -- a fantasy. And moreover, while you might be able to get some BDSM experiences without actually having a conversation about BDSM, direct sexual communication is not a threat to your sexual experiences -- it can improve them.

Do what you want, really, as long as it's consensual. If you want to have sex that's not communicative, that is your prerogative, as long as it's always consensual. (It's worth asking, though... are you so sure you can tell that it's consensual, if you don't talk about it?) Still. Learning how to talk about sex more directly and exactly might be hard or embarrassing or complicated, **but it is seriously worth it**. Not just BDSM; all sex.

It's so worth it.

* * *

This post originally appeared at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/03/11/storytime-sex-communication-case-studies/

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FEMINISM:

[theory] Towards My Personal Sex-Positive Feminist 101

I wrote this in 2011, when I realized that I couldn't find a good Sex-Positive Feminist 101 anywhere on the Internet. The original version contains a lot more links, including an evolving set of relevant links at the end.

* * *

Towards My Personal Sex-Positive Feminist 101

There's an aphorism from the early 1900s literary critic Andre Maurois: "The difficult part in an argument is not to defend one's opinion but to know it." Even though I identify as an activist and genuinely want to make a real impact on the world based on my beliefs... I often think that much of my blogging has been more an attempt to figure out what I believe, than to tell people what I believe. And sometimes, I fall into the trap of wanting to be consistent more than I want to understand what I really believe -- or more than I want to empathize with other people -- or more than I want to be correct. We all gotta watch out for that.

But I'm getting too philosophical here. (Who, me?) The point is, I am hesitant to write something with a title like "Sex-Positive 101," because not only does it seem arrogant (who says Clarisse Thorn gets to define Sex-Positive 101?) -- it also implies that my thoughts on sex-positivity have come to a coherent, standardized end. Which they haven't! I'm still figuring things out, just like everyone else.

However, lately I've been thinking that I really want to write about some basic ideas that inform my thoughts on sex-positive feminism. I acknowledge that I am incredibly privileged (white, upper-middle-class, heteroflexible, cisgendered etc) and coming mostly from a particular community, the BDSM community; both of these factors inform and limit the principles that underpin my sex-positivity. I welcome ideas for Sex-Positive Feminism 101, links to relevant 101 resources, etc.

* * *

Some Central Sex-Positive Feminist Ideas, according to Clarisse Thorn

1) **Desire is complicated, and people are different.** These ideas both seem basic and obvious to me as I write them, but I wanted to put them out there because I think they're useful anchors for all the rest.

2) **Gender is not a binary, and gender cannot be determined by a person's outer appearance or behavior.** Different people experience and display gender in a galaxy of ways. No woman in the world is perfectly submissive, perfectly hourglass-shaped, perfectly kind, etc, although these are stereotypes commonly associated with women. No man in the world is perfectly dominant, perfectly confident, perfectly muscular, etc. While many people reduce the idea of a person's gender to whether they have a penis or a vagina, the existence of trans people and intersex people proves that this isn't a valid approach. Individual people have all kinds of qualities that are attributed to the "other" gender... and the concept of an "other" (or "opposite") gender is weird in itself, because why does one gender have to be the "other," and what does that imply?

All this having been said, gender is frequently perceived as a binary, and many people fit themselves into the possibly-arbitrary system of gender that currently exists. There are ideas of "men" and "women" that are culturally understood, widely adopted, and socially enforced. Feminism has its roots in women resisting men's violent and social dominance, and in women resisting the cultural emphasis on stereotypical men's desires.

3) **Historically, sex has usually been defined in terms of two things: (a) reproduction, and (b) the sexual pleasure of stereotypical men.** Cultural sexual standards are based on these things. For example, the sexual "base system"; if you've read my work before then you'll have seen me talk about it a lot, because it's such a perfect example. It's commonly discussed among USA schoolchildren and it describes kissing as "first base," groping as "second base," oral sex as "third base" and penis-in-vagina sex as "home base." Why should this hierarchy exist? It only makes sense if we think of sex as being centered around reproduction. If we think of sex as being about pleasure and open exploration in ways that are different for everyone, then having a "home base" -- a standardized goal -- makes zero sense.

Another example: penis-in-vagina sex is often seen as "real" sex or "actual" sex, with all other sex considered "less real." How many arguments have you had over the course of your lifetime about whether oral sex "counts" as sex? (Hint: more than the subject deserves.) For a recent example, there's the Kink.com virgin shoot, wherein a porn model publicly "lost her virginity" notwithstanding the fact that she'd already had plenty of oral and anal sex on camera for years -- she'd just never had vaginal sex.

As for sex being defined by the pleasure of stereotypical men: one example is how people usually think about orgasms. In my experience and that of people I talk to -- and in the vast majority of porn -- it seems commonly accepted that sexual activity ends with a man's orgasm, whereas women are commonly expected to continue engaging in sex after having an orgasm... despite the fact that many women seem just as tired and less-interested in sex post-orgasm as many men are. In part, this goes back to defining sex in terms of reproduction: men have to orgasm in order for reproduction to happen, so men's orgasms must (supposedly) be central to sex. It's all influenced by these other constructions, like how penis-in-vagina sex is "real" sex, or "home base": many people are confused by the idea that you'd shift sexual gears to (for example) manual stimulation if you've already "made it to home base." But it also arises from centering stereotypical men's desires -- from a culture that just generally sees them as more important, more driving, and more necessary than women's. (Note that the majority of women don't achieve orgasm from penis-in-vagina sex in itself.)

When sex is defined in terms of reproduction and stereotypical male pleasure, the following things result:

+ People who aren't men have a harder time understanding their sexuality, because there are fewer models (for example: it's fairly common for women to figure out how to have orgasms much later in life than the average man -- like 20s or 30s, if ever)

+ Men who don't fit masculine stereotypes have a harder time understanding their sexuality (for example: there's a great essay by a former men's magazine editor in the anthology *Best Sex Writing 2010* in which he talks about how hard it was for him to come to terms with his desire for heavy women)

+ Even men who do fit masculine stereotypes feel limited from other types of exploration, and may derive less pleasure from sex than they would in a less broken world

+ Sex acts or sexual relationships that aren't reproductive are devalued, are seen as weird, or aren't even defined as sex (for example: stigma against gay sex, lesbian sex, many fetishes, etc)

4) **Women are expected to trade sex to men in exchange for support or romance.** Women who don't get a "good trade" (e.g. women who don't receive a certain level of financial support or romance "in exchange for" sex) are seen as sluts. Men who don't get a "good trade" (e.g. men who don't receive a certain amount of sex "in exchange for" a relationship) are seen as pussies. (Yes, "pussies"... don't you just love that a word for female genitalia is a commonly used insult against so-called "weak" men?)

What this also means is that many people have trouble examining motivations outside this framework: women are always expected to be looking for more emotional or financial investment from a guy, whereas men are always expected to be looking for more (or more so-called "extreme") sex. Women who actively seek sex, or men who actively seek intimacy, are shamed and hurt and confused for it -- often even within their own heads.

5) **Since stereotypical men have historically been much freer to explore their sexuality than people of other genders, the desires of stereotypical men have formed the pattern for "liberated sexuality."** As women have won freedom to act, work and explore outside the home more, we've been following patterns created mostly by men, and those patterns might look extremely different if women had created them.

When we talk about sexuality, I think that leads us to examine what "liberated sexuality" looks like. "Liberated sexuality" is often stereotyped as promiscuous, for example. "Liberated sexuality" is also stereotyped as being unromantic, never involving any of those pesky pesky feelings, etc. I write about this cautiously: I have no intention of telling anyone what "real" men do or feel, or what "real" women do or feel. However, it seems conceivable to me that most men are generally more likely to enjoy promiscuity and emotionless sex than most women are -- if only for hormonal reasons. Here's a quotation from the brilliant trans man sex writer Patrick Califia on the effects of testosterone:

It's harder to track psychological and emotional changes caused by one's taking testosterone than it is to notice the physical differences. But I think the former actually outweigh the latter. It isn't that testosterone has made me a different person. I always had a high sex drive, liked porn and casual sex, couldn't imagine giving up masturbation, was able to express my anger, and showed a pretty high level of autonomy and assertiveness. But all of these things have gotten much more intense since I began hormone treatments. During the first six months on T, every appetite I had was painfully sharp. A friend of mine expressed it this way: "When I had to eat, I had to eat right fucking now. If I was horny, I had to come immediately. If I needed to shit, I couldn't wait. If I was pissed off, the words came right out of my mouth. If I was bored, I had to leave." My body and all the physical sensations that spring from it have acquired a piquancy and an immediacy that is both entertaining and occasionally inconvenient. Moving through the world is even more fun, involves more stimulation than it used to; life is more in the here-and-now, more about bodies and objects, less about thoughts and feelings.

... Casual sex has changed. When I want to get off, my priority is to find somebody who

will do that as efficiently as possible, and while I certainly would rather have a pleasant interaction with that person, I don't think a lot about how they were doing before they got down on their knees, and I don't care very much how they feel after they get up and leave. It's hard to keep their needs in mind; it's easier to just assume that if they wanted anything, it was their responsibility to try to get it. I always preferred to take sexual initiative, and that has become even more ego-congruent. (pages 397-398, *Speaking Sex To Power)*

A trans woman friend once told me that not only did she get turned on more frequently pre-transition; also, she now has to feel more emotionally connected to her partner in order to enjoy sex. And she noted that she has to "take care of herself more" in order to feel turned on now -- not just in the moment, but in life, and in the relationship.

If we accept that there is, speaking generally, a difference in sexual desires between men and women (although individuals will always be unique), then it leads to new questions. If women were socially and culturally dominant, what would so-called "liberated sexuality" look like? If people of all genders are following patterns set by stereotypical men, then what does that mean for attempts to think around those patterns?

6) **Communicating consent is complicated, but consent is the only thing that makes sex okay, so we have to make every effort to respect it.** All sex is completely fine with me as long as it's consensual. Seriously, I really don't care what you do -- as long as it's consensual. (Try to find a consensual sex act that shocks me. I dare you.)

Communicating consent can, however, be complicated, and there are lots of different ways to do it. Many BDSMers are eminently familiar with this, as you can tell by the fact that some parts of the BDSM community have developed an extensive array of tactics for discussing consent. For example, the most famous BDSM communication tactic is safewords, which gives everyone involved a clear word that they can invoke to stop the action at any time.

Most people don't communicate directly about most things, and the stigma and high emotions around sexuality make it even harder for most people to communicate directly about sex. Hence, most sexual communication is highly indirect. Even among people who are accustomed to direct sexual communication -- like many BDSMers -- a lot of communication ends up being indirect and instinctive anyway; there's just no way to discuss every possible reaction and every single desire ahead of time. Everyone fucks up sometimes. No one in the world has a perfect track record on creating a pressure-free environment for their partners to express what they want... or asking their partners for what they want... or even knowing what they want in the first place.

So, yes, I acknowledge that communicating about sex and getting what you want consensually can be really hard. However, it's most important to not violate people's boundaries. No matter how hard it is, it's necessary to make a serious and genuine effort to measure and respect a partner's consent every time sex happens. Feminist ideas of enthusiastic consent are designed to help this process.

Here's my attempt at a quick definition of enthusiastic consent:

The basic idea is simple: don't initiate sex unless you have your partner's enthusiastic

consent. Not a partner who says, "Okay, I guess," in a bored tone, but doesn't actively say "no." Not a partner who is silent and non-reactive, but doesn't actively stop you when you start having sex with them. Not a partner who seems hesitant, or anxious, or confused. Enthusiastic consent means an enthusiastic partner: one who is responding passionately, kissing you back, saying things like "Yes" or "Oh my God, don't stop"... or a partner who talks to you ahead of time about what will happen, as many BDSMers and sex workers do, and knows how to safeword or otherwise get out of the situation if you do something they don't like.

It's worth noting that there are critiques within feminism of the concept of enthusiastic consent. For example, some feminist sex workers point out that when they have sex for money, their consent is not exactly "enthusiastic," but they still feel that their consent is real consent, and that their choices must be respected. The same goes for some asexual people. Asexuality is commonly defined as "not feeling sexual attraction to others," but some asexual people have romantic relationships with other people in which they have sex entirely to satisfy their partner, and some of them have said that they don't feel included by feminist discussions of enthusiastic consent.

Hey, even some of my non-asexual, non-sex worker friends have problems with the idea that they aren't "really" consenting unless they're super-enthusiastic about the sexual act at hand. A married friend once commented wryly that if she and her husband always demanded 100% enthusiastic consent from each other, then the marriage would fall apart. But as we continued to discuss it, she and her husband both agreed that they have zero problem with the situation as it stands.

I don't want to sweep those critiques under the rug. I figure that as long as everyone's communicating about the situation openly, and working to keep things relatively low-pressure, then consent is likely to happen, even if it's not perfectly "enthusiastic." I've had extensive debates on the topic with other feminists, though, and I often seek more, because honing consent theory is one of my favorite things!

All this having been said: the concept of enthusiastic consent has been very helpful for me personally. I know that it's also been helpful for an enormous number of other people who are trying to understand boundaries in their sexual relationships. I absolutely believe that enthusiastic consent is an important and useful standard, and I do my best to observe that standard as much as I can in my own relationships. So, while I think some critiques are reasonable, I also think that the idea of enthusiastic consent is the best baseline assumption to start these conversations... if not to end them.

7) **In practice, as long as everyone involved is having consensual fun, criticism is secondary.** Practically speaking, consent is the most important thing; from a pragmatic standpoint, the question of whether sexuality arises from biology or culture doesn't matter nearly as much. (I find the question of whether BDSM can be categorized as a sexual orientation to be more politically and theoretically interesting than practically important.)

Understanding sexual biology or culture may help us grasp some of the complexities of consent. For example, people often have trouble saying "no" to things directly: when was the last time you explicitly said "no" when you didn't want to do something? Which of the following exchanges is more likely:

Person A: Hey, want to come over tonight?

Person B: You know, I'd love to, but I'm so exhausted from work, I really need to get some sleep.

or

Person A: Hey, want to come over tonight?

Person B: No.

People of all genders really don't like saying "no" to things directly. Grasping this important cultural concept is one step on the path of learning how to communicate effectively about consent. But in my book, it's really not as important to understand why people hate saying "no" directly, as it is to understand that people hate saying "no" directly. It's necessary to understand that because it means that pushing someone until they say "no" can mean pushing them further than they wanted to go.

I believe that the most important role of social criticism -- including sex-positive feminism -- is not to tell people what to do. If you have sex that appears to be in line with ridiculous and oppressive stereotypes, I really do not care as long as everyone involved is consenting and having fun. I reserve the right to occasionally have consensual sex where a gentleman friend beats me up before fucking me, and I reserve the right to enjoy it.

But I want to offer sex-positive feminist analyses in order to help people understand themselves and their desires... and also understand their partners and their desires. I think that many people have sex they don't like, sex that's in line with ridiculous and oppressive stereotypes, because they haven't been exposed to anything they like better. I think many people have sex they don't like because they don't feel like they can look for something different -- they think it's the best they can get. I think many people have sex they don't like because they think it's what their partner wants -- and I think those people are frequently wrong, and I think most partners would genuinely prefer that everyone be having fun.

Which is why I try to deconstruct sexual norms and stereotypes. Which is why I encourage people to look for what they like. Which is why I always emphasize talking about it.

8) **Awesome, respectful, joyful, mutual sex means approaching sex as collaborative rather than adversarial.** Aside from solo sex (i.e. masturbation), sex always involves another person. And at its best, it's about having a good time with other people -- understanding their reality, accepting it, playing with it. The best metaphors I've ever heard for sex were all about collaborative art, like a musical jam performance. Here's a bit from Thomas MacAulay Millar's totally brilliant essay "Towards a Performance Model of Sex" (please do read the whole thing someday):

The negotiation is the creative process of building something from a set of available elements. Musicians have to choose, explicitly or implicitly, what they are going to play: genre, song, key and interpretation. The palette available to them is their entire skill set -- all the instruments they have and know how to play, their entire repertoire, their imagination and their skills -- and the product will depend on the pieces each individual

brings to the performance. Two musicians steeped in Delta blues will produce very different music from one musician with a love for soul and funk and another with roots in hip-hop or 1980s hardcore. This process involves communication of likes and dislikes and preferences, not a series of proposals that meet with acceptance or rejection.

... Under this model, the sexual interaction should be creative, positive, and respectful even in the most casual of circumstances.

("Towards a Performance Model of Sex" was first printed in *Yes Means Yes,* edited by Jessica Valenti and Jaclyn Friedman, the brilliant sex-positive anti-rape anthology that I want everyone in the entire world to read. It was also reprinted in *Best Sex Writing 2010,* edited by Rachel Kramer Bussel.)

9) **All people deserve equal rights, including sexual minorities.** As long as people are having consensual sex, they do not deserve to be stigmatized, harassed, or otherwise harmed for their sexuality. Period. No one should be fired for their sexual or gender identity. No one should have their kids taken away for their sexual or gender identity. Rape is still rape, even when it's perpetrated against a sex worker. I support decriminalizing sex work for a lot of reasons; for example, I'd love it if the law would quit harassing and jailing sex workers for having consensual sex, and I'd love it if sex workers could organize for better workplace safety. The bottom line is that people -- all people -- have rights. It's time to treat them that way.

* * *

In terms of actual ways to be sex-positive in everyday life, here are the three ways I usually encourage people to spread the sex-positive love:

A) **Avoid re-centering.** Sexuality shouldn't be societally "centered" on any particular norm, idea, or stereotype (except consent). It is frequently tempting to re-center "objective" ideas about sexuality onto ourselves, if we're different from the norm, or onto people we admire. But the truth is that -- on a societal level -- queer sex is just as awesome as straight sex; that BDSM sex is equally admirable as vanilla sex; that cisgendered people are not any more or less amazing than trans people. The decision to have sex is no better than the decision to avoid sex, and asexual people are just as great as hypersexual people who are just as great as anyone with any level of sex drive.

In alternative sexuality subcultures, one often encounters a kind of superior attitude, perhaps because we have to push back so hard against the norm. In polyamory, for example, some of us use the sarcastic term "polyvangelist": a person who insists that polyamory is "better" or "more evolved" or "makes more sense" for everyone, everywhere, than monogamy does. Neither monogamy nor polyamory is better than the other; they're just different. Polyvangelists are trying to re-center onto polyamory. Not cool.

B) **Start conversations.** One of the most damaging problems around sexuality is the overwhelming and constant stigma. It hurts people with certain sexual identities, preferences or pasts. It hurts them spiritually. It can hurt them societally, like when LGBTQ folks have difficulty adopting children, or former sex workers are not allowed to work at other jobs. It can even hurt them physically: 40 years after doctors started

noticing the HIV pandemic, too many people are still refusing to talk about sex openly, or give healthcare to sexual minorities directly affected by HIV. To say nothing of people who are attacked or killed for their sexual minority status, like trans people who are murdered in the street, or lesbians who are raped in order to "fix" their sexuality. Sexual stigma kills.

So when someone says something icky about sex and gender, or stereotypes a certain sex or gender identity, it's so great to challenge them -- or at least to question them. ("Really? What makes you think all gay people are abuse survivors?") And some of the most powerful sex activism out there involves starting discussion groups, creating venues for discussion, hosting sexuality speakers or sex-related art, etc.

C) **Be "out" or open, without being invasive.** This can be tricky, because I don't want to encourage people to aggressively talk about sex at totally inappropriate times -- and again, I'm against re-centering. On the other hand, the most powerful tool for destigmatizing sexuality appears to be coming out of the closet -- whether a person is queer, BDSM, or whatever. Openly acknowledging, owning, and discussing your sexual preferences can help others respect those preferences -- and can help others who share those preferences respect themselves. (Can you tell that I cried when I saw the movie *Milk?)*

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This post can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/05/08/towards-my-personal-sex-positive-feminist-101/

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S&M:

[theory] S&M Superpowers

I wrote this post in 2011, but I encountered the "superpower" framework for fetishes in 2008, before I started blogging. I was telling one of my first S&M partners about how broken and anxious I felt, and he said: "Why talk about it that way? You haven't lost anything. You've gained a superpower!"

* * *

S&M Superpowers

I've gotten so bored of the biases and stereotypes against S&M. It's like, "Hey, another person who implies that those of us who do consensual S&M were all abused as children? Sweet! That person is wrong, and I consider those views highly stigmatizing and sometimes damaging. So, can we go for a swim now?"

(For the record, the biggest and best-designed study ever done on this topic surveyed

20,000 people and found that S&Mers "were no more likely to have been coerced into sexual activity" than the general population. But -- also for the record -- an S&Mer whose sexuality was associated with being abused would not be "less legitimate" than the rest of us, as long as that person practiced kink consensually. Because what makes S&M okay is consent, right? Right. S&M isn't okay or not okay because of its "source," whatever that might be -- it's okay only when it's practiced consensually, right? Right. So this is all actually kind of a silly conversation to have in the first place, right? Right. It's too bad stigma tends to make zero sense, isn't it? Stigma loves to trick you into debating on its own terms.)

It's much more entertaining to imagine how people would talk about S&M, if we lived in a culture where S&M wasn't wildly stigmatized. In fact, **what if S&M were admired or seen as a great thing**... instead of being repressed and forced underground and seen as a dark, evil, disgusting thing? I've known people who called S&M and other fetishes "superpowers," in a kind of ironic twist on this concept.

Many people have written about how S&Mers can offer lessons in sexuality that we gleaned from our outside-the-box perspective (there's a whole paper on this topic for clinicians, written by psychologist Peggy Kleinplatz and titled "Learning from Extraordinary Lovers"). I myself have talked about how S&Mers tend to use much more careful and precise sexual communication tactics than the mainstream (examples include checklists and safewords). But these lessons are hardly **confined** to S&Mers -- there are lots of vanilla people out there who are awesomely careful and precise about communicating sexually.

The superpower framework is a bit different....

+ For example, I already noted that it's been demonstrated that S&Mers are not more likely to have endured non-consensual acts -- so we know that despite what Freud would have had you believe, all S&M does not arise from childhood abuse. But maybe it does arise from a childhood experience... an **awesome** childhood experience. Maybe the Missing S&M Link is that something totally wonderful happened to S&Mers in our childhoods.

Hey, vanilla people? I'm so sorry you all had such bad childhoods. Really, you have my sincerest sympathies.

+ For example, some folks will say that we S&Mers have a wire crossed somewhere; some genetic inferiority. But maybe we are totally way superior. Maybe average dominants and sadists are, say, more empathic than the norm. (There is, after all, actual research showing that consensual S&M increases intimacy.) Maybe average submissives and masochists are better at processing pain and enduring challenges, both physical and emotional, than the norm.

Sorry vanilla people, but we're going to have to start screening for your gross vanilla genes in the womb. Nothing personal.

+ For example, one of my exes has a story about how he was down in Latin America and he only had access to incredibly cold showers. So he gritted his teeth, stepped into the shower, and told himself that a dominant woman was forcing him to take it. "Actually it

made the shower a million times easier to deal with," he said later. "And I had a raging erection the whole time."

Aren't submissives awesome? I pity those of you who lack submissive tendencies.

Just because anything on the Internet can and will be misread, I will conclude this post by hammering down the point that **this is all a thought experiment, and I do not actually think vanilla people are any less wonderful than S&M people**. It's okay vanilla folks. I love you just the way you are.

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This post can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/06/21/sm-superpowers/

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S&M:

[theory] BDSM Can Be "Love Sex" Too

In early 2011, my fellow sex blogger Rachel Rabbit White asked me to participate in her initiative "Lady Porn Day." This was the result. There's a list of relevant links at the end of the online version of this article.

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BDSM Can Be "Love Sex" Too

I'm not a big porn consumer, but I have no problem with porn in itself. When I have a problem with porn, it's because I have a problem with how it was made: because there are labor issues, or questions of the actors' consent. Sometimes, I get frustrated with the context in which porn exists or the stereotypes it expresses -- but there, the problem is with the context and the stereotypes, not with porn in itself. I tend to think that most anti-porn anxiety arises from irrational grossed-out reactions and stereotype-created fears, and I try to open up conversations about the ethics of making porn whenever I can.

This isn't to say I don't get angry because many people in our society are pressured to have sex that doesn't work for them -- but that's not the fault of porn. I certainly get frustrated by sexual stereotypes, but I don't think porn created those stereotypes.

One stereotype I've been thinking about a lot lately -- one that I see expressed over and over in BDSM porn -- is the idea that BDSMers don't love our partners, or that love can't be part of a BDSM relationship. Here's a quotation from Pat Califia's *Speaking Sex To Power* that touches on this (note: contains **spoilers** about the endings of three famous BDSM novels -- *Story of O, Return to the Chateau* and *Nine And A Half Weeks):*

I still remember how crushed I was when I read Story of O *and* Return to the Chateau

and came to the ending, where Sir Stephen loses interest in O and tells her to kill herself. I can also remember being furious with the way Nine And A Half Weeks *(the book, not the movie) ends. The submissive woman has a public breakdown. She begins to cry hysterically, and is abandoned by her master, so that strangers have to obtain help for her. One of the cruelest stereotypes of S/M people is that we don't love each other, that there is something about our sexual style that makes our relationships mutually destructive and predisposes us to suicide.*

This quotation came to mind during a conversation I had a few days ago: I was talking to a girl who really likes BDSM sex but referred to non-BDSM sex as "love sex." Because, you know, love is just not an ingredient in BDSM sex. "Everyone knows" that -- the same way "everyone knows" that BDSM always arises from childhood abuse, or dominant sadism is for villains, or everyone who likes BDSM is damaged and miserable and irresponsible, or....

Not to put too fine a point on it: fuck that.

I'm not saying there's no BDSM smut out there with love in it. Anne Rice's Beauty series ends with Beauty riding off into the sunset with her loving sadomasochistic partner (although of course the characters deal with all kinds of uncaring brutality first). But even nuanced BDSM erotica seems to fall into this trap more often than not -- for example, Jacqueline Carey's *Kushiel's Dart,* which is so consciously written that it includes safewords, also portrays a main character whose most compelling BDSM relationships are with her enemies and whose love relationship is with a man who can't stand to hurt her. (Carey took a very different tack later in the series, with other characters; I've always wondered whether she did so as a reaction to criticism.)

It's easier to criticize than create. And all my porn critiques could come back and bite me soon, because I plan on releasing my own BDSM smut sometime... and I'm sure that what I produce won't even be close to perfect. Yet one thing I really want to ensure I represent in whatever I write is love. There are plenty of BDSM fantasies that partly operate on the absence of love -- that even **demand** it, perhaps because the fantasy is all about a vicious and emotionally distant dominant, or because much of the erotic tension is derived from how much the partners hate each other, or for lots of other reasons. And yeah, they're hot in their own way....

But it'd be so great if those weren't the standard.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/02/22/ladypornday-bdsm-can-be-love-sex-too/

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S&M:

[theory] Body Chemistry and S&M

This was originally published in 2011. I don't normally write basic "how-to" posts like this, but every once in a while I see a gap I just have to fill.

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Body Chemistry and S&M

I often think that good physical health is a widely-ignored element of good sex. I am obviously not saying that people in poor health can't have good sex (and in fact, I certainly hope they do -- more power to 'em). But it consistently amazes me how much my physical health factors into my sexuality, especially S&M. I am by no means an expert on this topic, but here are some examples:

* **Food.** I am both less interested in sex and in S&M when I'm hungry; ensuring that I've eaten well before I take some punishment is especially crucial. I try to eat well in general, but if I'm planning to have a heavy S&M encounter, I don't cut myself any slack. I try to specifically ensure that I eat enough protein before the date and I try to include some vitamin-heavy foods like beets, leafy green vegetables, etc. Eggs are a good source of protein; nuts, beans and tofu are my primary protein sources. If I don't have enough protein available for whatever reason, I at least eat enough food that I won't be hungry when I see my partner.

Part of the reason I'm writing this right now is that I've had trouble finding useful resources on the Internet for what people recommend as good pre- or post-S&M food, especially during aftercare. "Aftercare" is an S&M term for how people end their S&M encounters. One excellent page on aftercare describes it thusly:

Aftercare is the last act of the SM drama. It is the culmination, the pulling together of all loose ends, the finishing touches, the final communion between sharers of the SM ritual, the phase where the participants (usually the tops) formally give the fantasy scene a context in everyday reality. Its technical purpose is to transition both players from the elevated states created in a scene [i.e., an S&M encounter] back into normalcy, returning to the motor control and awareness they will need to drive home once the scene is over. But as any good SM practitioner will tell you, it's much more than that. It is the time after the action when the participants come together in mutual affirmation that something special was created and shared. It is when affection and closeness is offered and sought. It is, at very least, the proper time to express thanks to the person who has shared this tiny segment of your life with you. It can be, and often is, the most beautiful part of a scene, and it is part of the scene. To skip it altogether is as rude as having dinner at a friend's house and then bolting once you've eaten your fill.

A lot of tops keep food and water on hand to give bottoms at the end of a scene, which I think is probably a good idea. (Eating post-scene doesn't feel necessary for me as a bottom, but it might if I weren't so careful about what I eat beforehand.) Some people say that fruit or fruit juice is the way to go -- and indeed, it will give the bottom's system a sugar boost and may make them feel better for that reason -- but I would personally rather eat a protein bar, and I have some friends who feel the same way. Dungeons usually serve snacks, although the snacks aren't always very healthy.

A final note on food: I know there are people who specifically include food deprivation as part of their S&M. Obviously, this is totally fine by me as long as it is consensual, but I'd encourage people not to expect themselves -- or their partners -- to react the way they usually do to S&M, as long as they're hungry.

* **Weight.** I used to be much scrawnier than I am now, and as my health has improved, I've gained weight. Sometimes this freaks me out (it's impossible to be female in our society and not daydream about having cheekbones that can stab people), but it has been worth it. One time, after I'd been having a lot of anxiety about weight gain, my then-boyfriend emailed me the image of an art card printed with the words, "I gained 30 pounds... & sex has never been better!" He perceptively wrote: "Maybe that's why it's easier for you to have orgasms now? I think you should investigate this if you try to lose weight."

I am not in a position to comment about whether being overweight affects sex. But I can definitely assure you that being underweight is not good for your sexual well-being.

* **Sleep.** I much prefer to have S&M encounters on days when I've gotten a lot of sleep the night before; this is at least as crucial as eating well before an encounter. There are approximately a billion studies that show the far-reaching effects that getting enough sleep can have on our health, and they seem to usually recommend around 7-8 hours as a good amount per night (more for teenagers).

As with food, I know there are people who include sleep deprivation as part of their S&M encounters. Again, this is obviously fine by me as long as it is consensual, but I'd encourage people not to expect themselves -- or their partners -- to react the way they usually do to S&M, as long as they're tired. I don't know about you, but exhaustion certainly makes **me** erratic and overly emotional. If you're going to be doing something like S&M that can specifically create an erratic and overly emotional state... well, when overlapping that with exhaustion, it just seems like a good idea to be careful.

* **Alcohol.** Alcohol definitely decreases my pain tolerance (quite dramatically in fact), and it definitely makes it harder for me to get turned on. There is only one bonus to alcohol, and that's the famous "social lubricant" effect. I personally prefer to limit myself to one glass of wine, maaaaybe two, if I'm planning to hook up with someone; in general, stone-cold sobriety is my preferred state to go into S&M. Good S&M makes me high enough on its own.

I get the impression that some people get drunk before they do S&M because otherwise they feel too anxious to do S&M. As always, I'm not going to tell other people that they shouldn't do consensual things... but drunkenness frequently makes it hard to communicate and hard to know what's going on in your head, which means that drunkenness makes consent hard. Not impossible, just hard. Be careful.

A lot of people say that mixing substances and BDSM is always bad. Personally, I figure that if a person has a lot of experience with a given substance, and a lot of experience with a given BDSM act, and a lot of experience with their partner... then I kind of doubt they're taking a huge risk by doing a familiar BDSM act with a familiar partner in a familiar state of mind. It's a lot to deal with at once, and again, it's worth being careful.

And of course, substance abuse problems are a whole nother ballgame. But if a person has been drinking a glass of wine with dinner every night for 10 years, then I'm not going to tell her that I consider her incapable of doing BDSM after dinner.

I am not qualified to comment on non-alcohol drugs because I, of course, never do anything illegal. But for all your drug-related questions, the website Erowid.org is often very useful.

* **Illness.** I don't have any particular observations about how being sick changes my experience of S&M, but it definitely does. When I get sick and I have the option to reschedule a date, I always do.

* Aaand finally, **menstrual cycle.** I haven't tracked my cycle with enough care to know exactly how it affects me S&M-wise, but I'm pretty sure it does. As one of the good people at EduKink once observed, "The great part about playing with a woman is that you have 28 different partners, one for each day of the month!"

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/01/30/body-chemistry-and-sm/

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S&M:

[theory] Going Under

This was originally published in 2011. People have asked me whether there's any actual research out there on the altered states that some people access through S&M; as far as I know, there isn't. It's also worth noting that a lot of dominant partners go into another kind of "zone" that's sometimes called top-space.

* * *

Going Under

"Come back," an S&M partner said softly, the other day, pushing my hair out of my eyes. I blinked and shook my head in a futile attempt to clear it.

"That's weird," I said. "Someone else used to say those words to me when I was coming out of subspace. I... that's weird."

"I'm not surprised," he said. "It's a natural thing to say to you. You go under so fast, and so deep. You're so far away."

"Not all the time," I said. "And not with everyone. You're good at putting me there."

He smiled. "You bring it out in me."

Subspace is so hard to describe. I've written about it before, in passing, so many times, because it's so important, but I've never come up with a good description for it; and when I Google for it I can see that other people have the same problem. When I'm starting to go into subspace it's just soft and dark and slow. But when I'm really far under, I'm totally blank. Falling. **Flying.**

Somewhere else.

Come back.

What is it, where do I go? It's just submissive, masochist headspace. But I don't always get into subspace when I submit, and I don't always get into it when I take pain either. I'm not sure what the other ingredients are: some amount of trust, of course. And strong feelings about my partner make everything more intense... way more intense. Orders of magnitude more intense. Still, I've had new partners put me under with surprising thoroughness.

It's a lot like deep sexual arousal -- hard to think, hard to process, hard to make decisions -- but the deepest sexual arousal does not put me anywhere near deep subspace. Deep subspace is. More. Than anything else.

Some S&M teachers tell people not to drive after an S&M encounter, not for a while; not until you're over the subspace. They compare it to an altered state, like being drunk. Some S&M teachers caution that it's dangerous for the dominant partner to suggest a new activity in the middle of an S&M encounter -- something that wasn't negotiated beforehand -- because the submissive may not be able to think clearly enough to consent. (And because in those moments, the submissive will have a harder time than ever saying no.)

I sometimes think that when I was younger and less experienced, I abandoned myself to subspace more easily. I'm better at pulling myself out of subspace now, but I think the cost may be that it's harder for me to really get into it. (Safety first?) I trained myself to be able to say, "Don't stop," when I wanted my partner to keep going. (Sound easy? Trust me, it took a while.) Playing with unfamiliar partners, I trained myself to be on guard. (One of my sex worker friends told me once, "I don't care how deep the subspace is, I can always come out if the client tries to fuck me without a condom.") I got better at calling my safeword **before** I had to -- asking my partner to do something else or give me a break, rather than suddenly stopping everything once I hit my absolute limit.

I am nowhere near perfect, of course. In particular, I can rarely answer complicated questions, and sometimes my partners literally can't get me to answer **any** questions when I'm subspaced. Sometimes it takes me a long time to come out, and partners may get nervous while I'm surfacing. But I'm not sure these aspects can actually be eliminated from subspace. And I've gotten better.

I'm sure that in an emergency, I could talk and function straight out of heavy subspace. I doubt I would be optimally intelligent and thoughtful, however.

When I was younger, I'd get frustrated with my partner if he tried to ask me questions or clarify things or otherwise check in with me when I was in subspace. *Damn it, can't you*

see I'm not here? Can't you see I'm under? Don't drag me back -- Intellectually, I understood that my frustration was unreasonable, and I did my best to train myself to deal with the check-ins. To surface quickly, slip back under afterwards. But I had to experience subspace from the dominant side before I understood **how** hard it was to deal with.

I remember sitting with my arms around the submissive and occasionally asking him how he was; in response, he would murmur and snuggle up to me. Ten minutes. Twenty minutes. I was processing my own dominant experience, and I had questions; I'd occasionally ask one. He'd murmur something softly. After a while I really wanted a glass of water and I thought he'd basically fallen asleep, so I said, "Hey, I'm going to go get a glass of water, okay?" and tried to move away.

"No," he cried, and grabbed me. *Holy shit,* I thought, *so that's what surfacing from subspace can look like from the outside.* Suddenly I understood exactly where his head was at: barely any time had passed for him at all, and he was still drifting up through velvety layers of consciousness. When I tried to leave, he'd felt sudden panic, a shot of pure abandonment, *no no* ***no*** *you can't, you* ***can't*** *leave me alone when I'm like this, please I need your arms around me, I need you --*

I knew exactly what to tell him. "Shh," I said, "I'm here."

A dominant friend once told me that he always informs his partners ahead of time that he has to move after a good scene, he has to go for a run, and he won't stick around to guide them out of subspace. I've always wondered how his partners deal with it. Maybe it's easier if you know it's coming.

There are questions of consent, of negotiating new activities while a partner's in subspace. Some people have told me they can't even actually safeword when they're in deep subspace; I can't quite relate to this, but I imagine it could happen sometime. I myself have occasionally had trouble safewording in the past, but it wasn't ever just because of subspace, it was because of pride or difficult emotions with the dominant partner. Subspace did complicate things, but I don't think it was the reason I had trouble (though it can be hard to disentangle these things). But maybe someday I'll go under so far that it will be.

I'm not saying it's never okay to push further than you discussed, once they're under -- it's just important to be careful, and not to do it unless you're pretty sure you can read your partner... or that they have the emotional wherewithal to deal with it if you push too hard.

Because safety in subspace is a question of emotional safety, more than anything. The vulnerability and intimacy in those moments can be terrifying. The tiniest change in his tone can mean the difference between mindless fear and absolute trust. It's so scary, and so intoxicating, and so weirdly unexplainably glorious.

Come back.

The best part might actually be coming back.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/04/22/going-under/

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ORGASMIC "DYSFUNCTION":

[storytime] A Unified Theory of Orgasm

At one point during my blogging career, an editor for the iconic feminist publication Ms. Magazine *got in touch and asked me to do some promotion for them. I asked if they would accept a submission from me, and when the editor said yes, I poured my soul into this long article about my experiences learning how to have an orgasm. The article was rejected by* Ms., *so I went back to my old friend the Internet and got published on the adorable girl-power site OffOurChests.com. Then it was cross-posted in about a million places. I would love to get published in* Ms., *but in retrospect, I'm actually glad that this piece went out on the Internet instead of being trapped in a print publication. I've received an enormous amount of positive feedback for this piece, and I'm certain that most of the young people who tell me it helped them would never have seen it if it were in a print magazine.*

* * *

A Unified Theory of Orgasm

I CAN'T COME.

and it's poisoned

every romance

I've ever had.

masturbating doesn't work. I don't know why. I tried therapy too, but my smart, understanding, sex-positive, open-hearted doctor couldn't help. drugs while fucking? check. I date attentive men who only want to make me happy, but no matter how fantastic they make me feel, I can't get off. and believe me, I like sex. I love sex! how can it feel so good and not end in an orgasm? I tried experimenting, and I sure do love the kink. it feels great. but doesn't get me off. I've tried everything. everything.

now I have the best boyfriend I've ever had. but just like every other one, he can't get me off. big dick? oral sex? tons of foreplay? kink? it's all there. nothing works. I used to lie to my boyfriends and say it was ok that I couldn't get off. then at least they could enjoy sex without feeling guilty. but then they'd stop trying, of course. and this one is still trying... sometimes. I mean, it's clearly never going to work. so I can't blame him for not having the same passion for trying as he used to. and I keep thinking I should back off. after all, why put pressure on him to "perform"? he'll just resent me if I keep asking for more, even if I'm gentle about it and compliment him and all that. since nothing he does

works. it will never work.

and I try so hard not to get frustrated, but I can't avoid the knowledge that I am fucked up, I must be broken. I mean, any normal woman would have come by now. so what do I do? I don't know what I need. do I back off and focus on him? that's what I end up doing, because I can't face asking for a little more attention in bed anymore. what's the point? he'll just resent me when it doesn't work again. so I back off. and I can't help resenting him, just a little, for not noticing how much I'm hurting. and not trying, even if I am broken, and I will never ever come.

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I. ***Vaginal Pain***

When I wrote the above, I was actually pretty close to figuring out how to have an orgasm. But I didn't know that. I'd dealt with the anxiety of being unable to come for so long -- and I'd also recently begun to understand that my sexuality is oriented towards S&M -- and so anguish just flooded out of me, into those words. I craved S&M, but acknowledging the craving made me feel like a "pervert," a "freak." It contributed to my already-overwhelming fear that I was "broken" because I couldn't figure out how to come.

There's one thing I didn't mention when I poured out all that fear and shame: I experience rare vaginal pain -- not every time I have sex, not even most times, but occasionally. Medical science has traditionally failed to care about how women experience our sexuality, so very little research has been done on the subject. As a result, it's impossible to say why I get that pain. Is it some kind of physical problem? That seems likely, because my psychological comfort level with a sexual encounter doesn't seem to correlate with whether the pain happens or not. But because female sexuality is often stereotyped as too mysterious and emotional to be worth rigorous medical investigation, I doubt I'll ever know for sure.

For a while I was sure I was allergic to semen, because I read a magazine feature by a woman who said she was. *Aha,* I thought. I stopped taking hormonal birth control pills. I made my trusted monogamous boyfriends use condoms. The pain became less common. Yet throughout that time -- continuing through today -- I still get the pain occasionally, very occasionally. Sometimes I even feel the pain during encounters that lack vaginal penetration, so it's clearly not about having a penis in me.

I can push through the pain; I can even have an orgasm, a reflex that feels good yet is surrounded by not-good; but I can't get rid of the pain entirely. Whenever I think I'll never feel it again, it sneaks into some sexual encounter.

The semen allergy theory has been ruled out, since I get the pain without semen contact. That doesn't mean that hormonal birth control didn't have an effect, though -- the pain was definitely worse while I was taking it. The Pill intersects with sexuality in ways we still don't understand; one common side effect is that it reduces sex drive. Perhaps the Pill affected my sexuality in some physical-medical way, worsening the pain problem.

The long and the short of it is that I experience some vaginal pain; the pain is confusing

and hard to predict, and there aren't any good medical resources on the matter. Maybe the pain points to something unusual about my constitution. Maybe there's a reason it's harder for me to have orgasms than the "average" woman.

But the vaginal pain itself is not overwhelming, on the rare occasions that it crops up. And the vaginal pain is not even close to the most central issue of my sexuality -- or the biggest influence on my orgasmic ability.

* * *

II. ***S&M***

I identify my sexuality as BDSM -- a.k.a. kink, leather, fetish, S&M, or B&D. BDSM is a 6-for-4 acronym that encompasses a host of related activities, including bondage, discipline, dominance, submission, sadism and masochism. And yeah, I'm **really** into it: my desires are heavy and overwhelming; I dream of agony, of terrified screams for mercy. I've gone so far as to describe BDSM as my sexual orientation.

Before someone goes leaping to conclusions, there is a definite difference between "good pain" and "bad pain." The occasional pain I feel within my vagina is not good pain; it's not even interesting. It's just annoying. It's not sexy or enjoyable at all.

Some of us in the BDSM community have felt lifelong tendencies towards BDSM. We have conversations ending with thrilled exclamations: "You mean, you tied up your Barbie dolls as a child **too**?!" But BDSM is widely misunderstood and negatively stereotyped, and thus, many of us also went through periods of rejection. We've internalized so much anti-BDSM stigma from society that, at times, we freak out. We deny or erase our BDSM desires.

That's what happened to me when I was in middle school. As my sexuality made itself more and more evident, my anxiety peaked. I'd been producing secret sadomasochistic art and stories without labeling what I was doing, but I stopped. I blockaded my thoughts of violent power-play. I closed it all away as thoroughly as I could.

I still felt sexual desire -- I mean, I was entering my teens, so of course I did. Sometimes I felt so much desire, like in the middle of some inconvenient class, that I'd have to rest my burning forehead on the cold desk. I would close my eyes, and breathe deeply, and wait for the erotic shiver to pass. At home, I'd lie around my twin bed and dream about kisses; imagine men's hair and skin and touch.

Yet it was hard for me to trace my desire, to take control of it. I thought I had no problem with the idea of masturbation, but when I touched my own lady bits, I went cold. Vibrators did nothing but bore me.

I had excellent sex education, thank goodness. I went through a Unitarian Universalist sex education program that talked carefully about different experiences, that made space for gay and lesbian and bisexual and transgender and queer folks. I didn't only learn about sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy and condom usage; I was also encouraged to explore my sexuality, to value it. But this marvelous curriculum did not include BDSM and other non-standard sexual identities. Nor did it include much advice on how to negotiate sexual encounters with my partners. So, although I internalized many

positive and feminist messages about sex, my own sexuality remained invisible, bewildering and hard to talk about.

When I started having sex around my mid-teens, I liked it -- I liked it a lot -- but it seemed weirdly lacking. I'd never figured out how to masturbate, so I couldn't show my partners how to pleasure me. And although I occasionally suspected that I wanted something like S&M, I didn't understand how far I wanted to go.

A couple of teenage boyfriends tied me up... but then they acted solicitous and went down on me, which didn't send me over the moon (though it was fun). From this, I concluded that S&M was boring, but the truth is, I hadn't come close to the extremes that form my preferences. It was years later that I released my need for agony, tears, bruises and blood.

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III. ***Frigid***

As I got older and had more sex, my apparent inability to orgasm became the most toxic secret I had. Most of my closest friends didn't know. For a while I thought I must be "frigid," and ripped myself apart over the idea that I was a "frigid bitch," even though that made no sense. It was ridiculous to conceptualize myself that way -- my sexual desire was undeniable, unavoidable. But I had no other words, no other images or stereotypes, that described a pre-orgasmic woman.

When I did tell my friends, it almost never went well. The best-case scenario was a conversation with anecdotal fragments: "I knew a girl," one friend advised, "who couldn't have orgasms. Then one day she was tripping, and having sex, and she fell asleep, and when she woke up she was having an orgasm."

I also found a book on my father's top shelf, written by a guy who said he could give "any" girl a squirting orgasm. The author claimed that the key was for the woman to be comfortable. He also claimed that the woman had to not know what he was trying to do. In fact, the book explicitly recommended that men prevent their girlfriends from reading it.

Needless to say, it was hard to extrapolate a Unified Orgasm Theory from these tales. The only things that seemed clear were that I somehow needed to both "let go" and to "keep trying." But how?

Every once in a while I made the mistake of telling someone who was convinced they knew the answer -- which was: sleep with **them**. When I got drunk with one sexually experienced male friend and asked for advice, he insisted that if I'd just fuck him I'd be sure to come. "Anytime you want," he slurred, "I'll give you an orgasm. Guaranteed!" The fact that I was not attracted to him was, in his view, unimportant.

Worse was my lesbian female friend who declared that I had "issues." She said that I ought to sleep with a woman. Ultimately, she turned out to be right that the problem was one of sexual identity, but she was wrong that I was a repressed bisexual. Her campaign to get me to sleep with her ended in a threesome with a guy I had a crush on. I liked bits of that evening, but most of it was boring -- if not distasteful. When I tried to talk to my

friend honestly about it later, she insisted that I loved the whole experience. She said that I was merely feeling morning-after guilt. "You were totally into it," she informed me. She was clearly smug with victory, but angry that I resisted her version of events. I felt resentful for years.

I didn't even tell my partners about my orgasm difficulties until I'd known them for a while, because my secret felt like such Restricted Information: I couldn't give it to anyone I didn't trust. I couldn't abide the idea of "everyone knowing" how broken I felt. I couldn't stand the combination of pity and fascination that my problem evoked in the few who knew.

When I did get around to telling my partners, that was most complicated of all. I was quite unpopular in high school, and so I was something of a late bloomer -- boyfriend-free until my late teens. It took years before I had any confidence in my boyfriend interactions. And because I had no idea how to come and no idea where to start and little idea of how to communicate about sex, I could not give guidance about what I wanted.

I also felt paranoid that lovers would resent me if they felt I was demanding something too "difficult" during the sexual "exchange," so I downplayed my feelings. I told awful lies like "it's not a big deal that I can't come" -- lies that broke my heart as I spoke them, but felt safer than the truth.

I did manage to have one orgasm in my teens -- one. I'm still not sure how it happened. It occurred one evening when I was incredibly tired, but went out with friends to get a fudge brownie sundae anyway. When I got back, my boyfriend came over and wanted to have sex, and I let it happen -- despite being tired and uninterested and full of sundae -- because I had not yet internalized the notion that my boyfriends wouldn't hate me if I denied them sex. I was barely present during the act, but I jolted into awareness when I realized I was having an orgasm. Afterwards, exhaustion overwhelmed me and I fell straight into sleep -- so deep that my boyfriend was unable to wake me.

This was puzzling and hard to analyze. What aspects of my singular orgasm should go into my Unified Theory... and which aspects were irrelevant?

The chocolate? Well, chocolate is arguably a mild drug, and drugs help some people come. Also, there were studies that found mild aphrodisiac qualities to chocolate. So maybe.

The position? The position had felt really good but was somewhat awkward, and I felt weird asking my boyfriend to reproduce it, so I didn't let myself think about the position. (I'm much better at communicating with my partners now.)

What about the exhaustion? It made sense that being very tired might help me "let go." But I hadn't been very turned on or enjoyed the rest of the encounter, mostly because I was so exhausted; and I didn't want to deliberately force myself to have sex while tired. So while the exhaustion might have been a factor, I filed it under "less-than-useful" as well.

I didn't worry about the problem too much for a while, because I figured that now that I'd had one orgasm, surely it would become easy. I didn't tell my boyfriend it had happened,

either, because I didn't know how to describe exactly how. I thought I'd figure it out as we went along, and then I would tell him exactly what it took.

Unfortunately, it wasn't that easy. Months and years passed without replicating the incident. Anxiety began seeping back. My Unified Orgasm Theory was not doing well.

My fear of being perceived as "demanding" during sex and relationships was at a ridiculous extreme back then. For example, I'd heard over and over that boys don't like girls who are "high-maintenance," so I told my boyfriends that I never wanted them to buy me flowers. I thought that men would feel relieved that they didn't "have to cater to me," but they were just puzzled. (One responded by buying me fake flowers.)

Because of the awful shaming stereotypes around cunnilingus, I sometimes refused that too. I couldn't believe that the boyfriends who were willing to go down on me were actually enthusiastic about it, enjoying it -- and when my anxiety became too painful, I inevitably stopped them. I always stopped them long before I stopped enjoying the act, because I was so scared that they hated it, and hated me for wanting it. I was scared that they resented me more and more, the longer they did it and I didn't come. My fear crept up my spine and twisted around my heart until I **had** to make them stop.

Sometimes I felt trapped between love and disgust, like with the boyfriend who constantly complimented me on how great in bed I was, but who seemed unaware of how much I felt missing. The worst was when he went off on a rhapsodic list of my wonderful qualities ending with: "... and I don't even have to worry about giving you an orgasm!" He didn't see the bind he was putting me in, the awful self-suppression and self-wounding that he encouraged. He seemed unaware that I heard him telling me: "You're great in bed because you are constantly disappearing your own needs, and never asking anything complicated of me!"

In fairness, I wasn't giving him any guidance on how to do better with me. In fairness, I had no idea what kind of guidance to give.

They had their own social programming, and I didn't communicate well. But sometimes I still have trouble forgiving my early boyfriends.

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IV. ***The Fight***

Not all my boyfriends were willing to do as little as going down on me. One, in particular, resisted very strongly; never did it at all. This was an especial problem because he was one of the men I've loved most in my life, and our relationship lasted for years. I think well of him when I think of anything other than sex. But when I remember having sex with him, I feel echoes of sick panic and heartbreak.

By the end, every time I slept with him I felt nothing but disgust.

He seemed to prove all my fears: that the men in my life would loathe and resent me if I tried to discuss my confusion and desperation; that they would loathe and resent me if I asked for help with my sexual needs. Towards the beginning of our relationship, I tried asking him (very timidly) to go down on me, and he simply refused. In later

conversations he insisted that cunnilingus was "too degrading," an assertion he made with a weird lack of irony, given that I was going down on him regularly.

As the years passed, my frustration deepened and I started thinking about experimenting more sexually, but I was terrified of mentioning it. I didn't know what I wanted to experiment with -- I really believed that I'd "already tried" BDSM, and that I didn't like it -- but his initial rejection of mere cunnilingus didn't make me feel confident.

Finally, I got to the point of directly asking for sexual experimentation, and we had the worst fight ever.

I recall that our relationship was somewhat rocky already. One of my journal entries from that time contains the sentence, "I can't seem to **not** make him angry when I'm trying to discuss our relationship." For this particular fight, we were sitting in his room reading when I scraped together my courage and asked for his help in figuring out my sexuality. "Well, what do you want me to do?" he demanded.

"I don't know," I said, "but I think there must be some way to find out -- I don't know, there have to be books?"

"That's **ridiculous**," he snapped. "I love you, but I'm not going to **read books** in order to figure out how to have sex with you."

It got worse from there. I was crying within the first few sentences. At one point, he outright shouted at me "I don't care about your satisfaction," at which point I said, "You can't mean that," and he repeated it. Eventually, I simply turned around and walked out of his room. I had nowhere to go; it was a long train ride to visit him, and the trains had stopped running that day. It was mid-winter, and freezing cold. Crying, I put on my coat and shoes and exited the house, onto his suburban street.

I walked completely at random. I was hardly able to see. Fortunately, because it was so cold, no one else was out and about. I muffled my sobs by bowing my head into my collar. After fifteen minutes, I discovered my cell phone in my pocket and tried to call my best friend, but she didn't answer. I was still walking around crying an hour later, when she returned the call.

She calmed me down and got the story out of me. It was the first she'd heard about my inability to orgasm, and she didn't know how to advise me because she didn't have the same problem. Also, it was obvious to both of us that trying to communicate with my boyfriend wasn't working. It was obvious that there might be no way to successfully communicate with him on this topic at all.

Eventually, after she'd managed to quiet me into a trembling jellylike mass, my friend said gently, "Okay, hon, you need to hang up and go back inside." She was right. So I did.

When I stepped back into my boyfriend's room, he was still reading. I could sense from the texture of our silence that he felt bad, though. I was exhausted, I felt like a stiff breeze would blow me apart, but I told myself that I had to set a line. I was sure my voice would waver as I made myself say: "If you're going to tell me that you don't care about my sexual satisfaction, then I can't do this anymore...."

"I never said that," he said softly.

I closed my eyes. He would do this sometimes, insist that he hadn't said words I was **sure** I'd heard, and it always made me feel like I had gone insane. I **knew** he'd said it. I'd even responded with, "You can't mean that," and then he'd **repeated** it. But I felt so tired. It had been hard enough to start the conversation. Hard enough to walk around the streets crying for hours.

Maybe I really did misunderstand him somehow; I've been over those moments in my head a million times, and I don't know anymore. Maybe I misunderstood. Or maybe he was falling into a classic pattern of emotional abusers. Maybe he insisted that I was hallucinating in order to confuse me out of protesting: abusers do these things because they work.

What I do know for sure is that when he halted the conversation with a flat denial, I couldn't bring myself to even try to talk about it again. Couldn't bring myself to resume the conversation. But I also couldn't bring myself to break up with someone I loved so much. We talked about other things instead.

And, of course, nothing about our sex life changed at all.

When my best friend called me the next day to check in, I said, "Well, he says that he didn't say what I thought he did."

Her silence echoed with disbelief.

"Maybe I just... didn't understand what he actually meant," I said, but my words sounded weak even to my own ears.

"Maybe," she said doubtfully, but she didn't press the issue.

Even after that fight, I continued dating that man for a long time. I look back now and I can't imagine how I did it.

* * *

V. ***Men's Perspective***

The gendered societal pressures that affect men are worth discussing, and worth analyzing, and I often do just that. There is undeniable pressure on men to "perform" sexually, for example. I try to have sympathy for men who feel this pressure -- but it is difficult sometimes, because its major effect on **my** life has been to silence me. To make me feel as though I couldn't ask for anything sexually. As though I couldn't express my needs without hurting my boyfriend's feelings or making him angry.

And even now, when I talk about this stuff, I am as vague as I possibly can be about the exact timeline. The last thing I want is for people who know me to read this and know exactly when I started having orgasms. I don't want anyone to know exactly which partners "couldn't perform." Because I know those men might feel it as a social punishment, and as much as I hate the dynamics at work, I can't hate the men who were part of them. They had their own social anxieties and their own blind spots and if I didn't understand what was wrong, how could they?

I recently had dinner with a former partner. At one point we found ourselves having a very explicit conversation, and I mentioned that I've figured out how to come. He looked sad and apologized: "I'm sorry I was never able to get you there." I had no idea what to say.

* * *

VI. ***S&M, Redux***

I finally came into my BDSM identity around age 20. At first, when I was faced with the fact that I wanted to be hurt until I cried and begged for mercy, I freaked out. I had no idea what to do about BDSM, no idea how to feel about it. The only thing I knew for sure was that I'd found something I really **needed**. But what did that **mean** for me, when I was also trying hard to be an independent, rational feminist with self-esteem and integrity?

It took me years to parse out my thoughts on feminism and BDSM, to feel comfortable with BDSM, and to talk openly and comfortably about it. During that process, I got better and better at finding partners who were interested in my sexual desires and willing to experiment. I also got to the point of reading sexuality advice books on my own, including books specifically on BDSM. (For recommendations, please check the notes at the beginning of this book.)

And I gritted my teeth, forced down my anxiety, and looked into books about the female orgasm.

One book that came highly recommended from Amazon.com was Lonnie Barbach's *For Yourself.* By the time I was halfway through the first chapter, I was crying because what she wrote felt so true. At the end of the first chapter, I put it down and was never able to pick it up again. Barbach wrote compassionately about experiences very similar to mine -- for instance: *[Are you afraid to talk to your partner about your problem] because you're embarrassed to ask for what you want at a particular time; afraid your partner will refuse, get angry, or feel emasculated?*

But she also ended the first chapter this way: *You have to assume responsibility and be somewhat assertive. Our culture has taught us that a woman should depend on a man to take care of her, which means she can blame him for any mistakes. It's nice to be driven around in a car, but it's also nice to be able to drive yourself so you can go where you want to, when you want to. But to do that, you'd have to assume some responsibility.*

It was the same "let go" and "keep trying" advice I'd been coming across for years, except that now it was wrapped up in a nice package of assumptions about me: implications that I wasn't assuming responsibility or being assertive. I felt like she was telling me that I chose to depend on a man to take care of me.

Maybe it would have been okay if the rest of the chapter hadn't been so miserably true, but the combination of reading a bunch of truth about how I was feeling -- then being told that I wasn't trying hard enough, that I was choosing to avoid responsibility.... It was toxic.

I also had the bright idea of asking my gynecologist. The doctor rolled her eyes as I spoke, then told me that the problem was obviously my partners. When I insisted that I

needed more guidance, she referred me to a center that gave orgasmic dysfunction "evaluations" at $1,500.00 a pop. I was earning $7.50 per hour at the time. I didn't go.

I got up my nerve and talked to my mother, who had been extremely helpful and caring when I came out to her about BDSM. During the BDSM conversation, I'd been scared -- then I felt immense relief as Mom told me that there was nothing wrong with me, and reassured me that I wasn't "giving up my liberation." When it came to orgasms, though, she seemed unsure of what to say. She did at least tell me that she, too, couldn't come easily, which made me feel a little better.

Most helpful was the therapist I found on the Kink Aware Professionals list -- an online list of doctors, lawyers, and other professionals who believe they understand alternative sexualities such as BDSM. I tried one therapist who didn't seem to get it, but the second therapist I saw was wonderful. He helped me through an enormous amount of my BDSM anxiety. The orgasm problem was thornier, but he didn't make any assumptions, and he did listen carefully, which was more than most people did.

My therapist gently encouraged me to get a second opinion about my how my body worked, from a new gynecologist. Irrationally, I didn't. I suppose I still felt crushed by how the first gynecologist had reacted. I also hoped I'd learn to come as I explored BDSM more -- which turned out to be true.

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VII. ***Figuring It Out***

In retrospect, I recognize that I went through a brief period where I had orgasms sometimes -- weak ones. But the orgasms were hard to hang on to because they happened during sex with my boyfriend. This would be the same boyfriend I described at the beginning of this piece, when I wrote: *now I have the best boyfriend I've ever had. but just like every other one, he can't get me off. big dick? oral sex? tons of foreplay? kink? it's all there.*

Now I see, in retrospect, that **not** everything was there: neither of us had questioned our sexual assumptions, our societally-determined sexual scripts. And one of the biggest sexual scripts is that sex ends with the man's orgasm. That the man's orgasm is the goal.

It's very hard to think around these scripts. It's very hard to even be aware of them. So, since my paramount goal during sex was obviously "satisfying my man," I often pushed my orgasm away due to my focus on him. I knew that if I came then I'd feel tired and less interested in sex (at least for a while). And obviously, if he were to have his all-important manly orgasm, I couldn't go falling asleep on him could I? I couldn't even pause to mentally process my sensations if he seemed to be enjoying himself, now could I? Plus, once he'd come, I certainly couldn't expect him to stimulate me any more than he already had, because he was tired; he'd just had an orgasm!

(These days, one of my #1 judgments of whether a new partner could be good for me is this: if I didn't come before he did, then does he take a moment post-orgasm to catch his breath, and then turn to me and smile and offer to do what it takes?)

In the end, figuring it out was almost anticlimactic.

I saw an online video from sex educator Betty Dodson called "Did I Orgasm?"... and I realized that I'd been occasionally having weak orgasms already. I was also experimenting more and more with BDSM; simultaneously, I put more and more power into the hands of my fantasy men; and once I had compelling private fantasies to feed on, I couldn't help masturbating. Here was the key: initially, I'd felt that masturbating **in itself** involved having too much control over the situation. And that's not how my sexuality worked.

Oh yes, **in practice** I take responsibility for my pleasure; and now I'm pretty good at clearly discussing what kind of role my partners will take ahead of time, describing what they'll do with me. These days, I sometimes take the dominant role, too. But even now, it's hard for me to come if I **feel like** I'm in control.

On some level, even if it's the most tissue-thin fantasy, I usually have to convince my emotional-sexual self that I'm not in charge. It helps if I have an emotional connection with whoever I'm fantasizing about, too. If I don't have an emotionally involved romantic partner, I seem to automatically create BDSM-themed fantasy worlds with hilariously ornate storylines. Years ago, it never occurred to me that I couldn't reach orgasm because my internal characters weren't compelling or my plotlines weren't dramatic enough... but sometimes it's true!

In my case, I believe that BDSM is the key to my sexuality. It is as close to the core of my sexual identity as I can get; close enough that, like some other BDSMers, I occasionally call it my "orientation." But I don't think BDSM is like that for everyone, and I don't even think that's the whole story with me -- because during the whole time, this self-discovery process, I was doing things like eating more regularly, keeping a healthier diet, putting some weight on my previously stick-thin frame, and exercising more. Health plays a big role in any kind of sex, and it's important to think about. Still, even now I can't come without some thread of dominance and submission, even if it's an entirely internal fantasy that I imprint on whatever is happening.

When women ask me for advice on how to have orgasms, I feel helpless because there is no "one true way." I don't want to fall back on the old "let go" and "keep trying" that I received -- it's decent advice, but it's so vague. Perhaps something more useful would be this: first, it really helps to have an idea of what you want. I know this can be hard in a society that soaks us with sexual images designed for stereotypical men, rather than images for women (and especially not for non-normative women like myself). And I feel so aware of how patronizing and useless the "you aren't in touch with your sexuality, that's why you can't come" argument can be. Remember, I had that argument used against me by my lesbian friend. But it was, in fact, kinda true for me -- just in a different way: I need BDSM.

If you're not sure what you want, don't panic. Just keep your eyes and ears open, and try to monitor your reactions. It may surprise you. If it does, don't worry -- just research it! No matter how unusual your sexuality, there is probably information on the Internet about it. (And even if your sexuality is unusual, odds are it's not nearly as unusual as you think it is.)

I often refer to my personal favorite sex education website in the entire world: it's

Scarleteen.com, a grassroots feminist effort with an amazingly comprehensive perspective. Scarleteen has an incredible impact on many, many lives. Sometimes I read it just for fun!

Secondly: it may help not to prioritize orgasms. I am not saying orgasms aren't important; I just don't want the importance of orgasms to wound you, the way it wounded me. For me, it is helpful to imagine sex as a journey. For me, it helps to focus on having fun throughout, instead of doing what it takes to reach the "goal" of orgasm. If you're not taking pleasure in the journey -- or at least indulging some curiosity -- then why keep going? Why not stop and try something else?

Experimenting sexually in an open-ended way has been, for me, the most productive possible attitude. And in fact, once I knew how to make myself come, I discovered that -- though it's helpful to be able to attain that release if I really want to -- orgasms aren't actually my favorite part of sex! There are lots of other things I like better.

It's also worth noting that our definitions of "orgasm" are fairly narrow. Some research indicates that there may be other ways to conceptualize orgasms than the stereotypical genital-focused approach.

Thirdly, although it's possible for a person to explore sexuality on her own, relationships can make or break the process. We all make some compromises for romance. But when we compromise, we should know **what** we're compromising, and **we should think about whether the compromise is worth it**.

For me, sexual exploration and satisfaction are incredibly important -- but it took ages to develop the courage to put my foot down about them. After my boyfriend shouted at me that he didn't care about my sexual satisfaction, it took me an embarrassingly long time to end things with him; I really was in love, and we'd been together for years. But my sexuality wasn't even close to a priority for him, and breaking up with him was one of the best decisions I ever made.

After ending that relationship, I was able to build my self-confidence and self-esteem with new boyfriends surprisingly fast -- and my boyfriends helped me more than they probably know. I owe countless small debts to men who accepted my inability to orgasm, took my anxieties about it into account, and sometimes gently pushed me to try new things.

One particular guy comes to mind: I told him I couldn't come, but that I wanted to experiment with S&M, so we arranged to buy rope and some painful equipment. During our conversation, he gently drew me out on my history, and then he said, "You know what I think we need to go along with this rope? A vibrator."

I blinked and said hesitantly, "I don't know, I've never really liked vibrators." But I was willing to try it again, and that's when I learned that vibrators are awesome. That's when I learned that what I really need is to convince myself I'm not in charge -- that once the correct fantasy is in place, vibrators make everything easy.

Even today, few things make me happier than a man who grasps the tension I still sometimes feel about "being demanding" or "asking for too much." I communicate with

straightforwardness that amazes most partners, but it's crucial for them to understand that I still have hesitations. That even I, sometimes, need a moment to articulate what I want -- or need to be asked whether there's anything he can do.

Lastly, and most importantly: don't let go of your boundaries unless you're sure you're ready. If you really don't want to do something, **you don't have to make yourself do it**. I'm writing this because when I was growing up, all the sex-positive work I read encouraged exploration at the cost of boundaries, and I think that's wrong. There were times when that attitude hurt me -- for example, I did things I didn't like because people claimed I hadn't yet gotten over my sexual "issues," like my lesbian friend in college. And I know that attitude has hurt other women, too.

I don't like seeing sex-positive feminism equated with making oneself freely sexually available. Exploring sexuality does not mean you have to ignore your warning bells.

Sexuality is so complicated. Sex cannot be reduced to bodies, or hormones, or psychological stereotypes. Sex cannot be reduced to certainties, to shoulds and shouldn'ts. If I could destroy every force in our lives that drives home ideas of sexual "normality," I would. Which leads to my final piece of advice: **don't let me tell you what to do**. This is just my experience, just my ideas. As with everything, I want you to do whatever feels right for you -- as long as it's among consenting adults.

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VIII. ***Study Questions!***

Here are some things that might be interesting to reflect on:

1) What questions do you have about your orgasm?

1a) Where have you researched the answers to those questions?

1b) Have you ever discussed those questions with your partners?

2) What questions do you have about your partners' orgasms?

2a) Have you ever asked your partners about their orgasms?

3) What's one thing you wish you'd said in bed to a partner?

3a) What would have made it easier to say it?

4) What are your favorite sexual acts? Are there other ways you could perform them?

5) What's the best sexual experience you remember? What made it great?

6) What's the hottest thing you've seen or read? What made it great and are there ways you could participate?

7) Does anything from this article resonate with you? What?

* * *

Here is a tangential footnote on issues of manliness:

When this article was first posted, a guy grabbed the first comment on the version that I posted to the feminist blog *Feministe,* protesting that I clearly don't get the men's side of this equation. I don't usually get super angry about comments on the Internet, but in that case I did, and I had to take a while to calm down.

There was a mild comment fracas. Eventually, in response to that guy, I wrote:

I worked really hard on this article to try and note both:

A) how men's perspective might make this difficult for them, but simultaneously

B) why men's insecurities aren't actually an excuse for men to treat women badly.

In my experience women are actually extremely aware of men's insecurities. ***Women frequently silence themselves and put up with a lot of crap because we are afraid of "emasculating" our man, as I specifically noted in the article.***

Given that this was an article about:

1) a woman's experience,

2) and what it's like to be a woman,

3) and why this issue is difficult to take on as a woman,

4) and why women shouldn't allow men's insecurities to shut us up...

... can you see why I would avoid putting a lot of text towards describing men's insecurities in loving detail?

Now. With that having been said....

One of the guys in the Clarisse Thorn Manliness Brain Trust (tm) emailed me with some thoughts in the wake of this article. Once again, I want to emphasize that I don't want anyone to feel that they "ought to" give a crappy partner "another chance" if that partner is treating them badly. I spent **years** giving a terrible boyfriend millions of second chances because I kept telling myself that he was just "insecure." **Walking away from that oh-so-"insecure" man was one of the best choices I ever made.** Nonetheless, I think that the following comment from my Manliness Brain Trust (tm) friend might be useful for some people:

When I first saw this post, my first thought was that I have to pass it on to a couple of the people I'm involved with, who have difficulty reaching orgasm because it's an awesome, awesome article. My second thought was that it seemed like Clarisse didn't really grok the guy's side of this exchange.

Somewhere among 5th, 7th and 9th thoughts, was the notion that I'd be a jerk to raise that point in the comments. This article is a great reference for women working through difficult climax issues and there's no need to drag the conversation off to the guy side of the experience... So I sent Clarisse an email about it instead. Because the thing with Unification theories is that they're never all the way done. And things could have been so much easier for Clarisse if her boyfriends didn't suck. Maybe some insight into why they sucked would help with the ongoing development of the model, or at least provide some

eased management strategies.

The thing is, I don't feel attacked or diminished or anything else by this article. Despite the fact that I'm a guy, I have insecurities and I can in some places see a stupid, obnoxious mirror of myself in Clarisse's dumb ex boyfriends -- that isn't at all why I thought I should talk about the topic more with the author. It just seemed to me like Clarisse hadn't quite got her head around what the guys were going through with their side of this interaction. Where their insecurities came into play.

In my head, I see a young woman, working through her own issues with orgasms reading this, and seeing her young boyfriend reflected in Clarisse's past relationships. And the take away from Clarisse's experience at the moment seems to be that if your boyfriend is insecure and stupid, maybe he's not the right person to work through this with you. And I'm not sure that's doing anyone any favors. I mean shit, maybe that is what you should take away from reading this -- that the guy you're with isn't the right person for you right now if you're struggling with difficulty achieving orgasm. But maybe there are other stories going on as well. Maybe he's insecure about his role and his failings (or his body or whatever) and maybe he could be the right guy to work through this with you, if you're the right person to work through his insecurities with him?

And please, please don't take that to mean let things slide because you don't want to emasculate him. I'm not for a moment advocating putting up with nonsense because he's a guy with a precious male ego. But lots of guys, certainly including myself, have personal insecurities, about masculinity and about sexuality, and attached to the perceptions of masculinity in sexual situations. As a guy, we're all taught that real men don't give head -- or at least that it's a private thing that we don't admit too -- which is so fucking stupid, but is still really out there in heteronormative western male culture. We're all taught that getting a woman off is our job, and to be a good man, and a good lover, we have to get our partner off before we get off. I don't know a single sexually active guy who has never felt humiliated because he came too early, and too early is largely defined as before our partner gets off. And we're all taught that real men get their partners off with nothing but the awesomeness of our cocks. Hand jobs/digital penetration are fine for highschool or fore play -- but our image of a good man, and a desirable lover doesn't integrate with those things. We're coached by pop culture and porn to believe that the guy every woman wants is the one who sticks his cock in and makes her explode with joy from the very first thrust. And any time that doesn't happen, the guy is at fault.

And again, to stress my position here, I think all of those things are stupid, illogical nonsense. But those are the pressures that are on guys. And maybe, if the guy that you're with is struggling to work through your orgasm issues, maybe it's because he's so far under the weight of his own insecurities that he doesn't know how to cope with his own issues, and be a supportive partner to work through yours. But the thing about a good relationship, is that together you're stronger than the sum of your individualities. Maybe as a couple, you can work through his insecurities and your orgasm difficulties at the same time. Nobody's problems exist in a vacuum, and sometimes finding the support you need is easier if you just fix the support you already have.

I posted the comment in response to the other dude's *Feministe* comment, and there was some discussion afterwards -- including some guys saying that they never got any memo

about cunnilingus being "not manly."

Here's my wrap-up: sympathy is good. Trying to build a better relationship is good. And I understand that some people may have serious, important reasons that they can't or don't want to walk away from their romantic partner. (That's one of the things feminism has always worked towards: giving people many sources of support and safety nets, so people can leave abusive partners if necessary.) But. Seriously, if your partner sucks? Walking away is an option -- it's even an option, sometimes, when you think it's not an option. Just remember that.

* * *

This post can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/10/31/a-unified-theory-of-orgasm/

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BOUNDARIES:

[storytime] I'm Not Your Sex-Crazy Nympho Dreamgirl

This was originally published in 2011 on GoodMenProject.com, and it got a lot of attention. I think the feelings I outline in this piece are shared by a lot of people, and that they're one of the reasons people often get angry about porn. But as I said in "BDSM Can Be 'Love Sex' Too," I don't think restricting porn is the answer to these feelings. I think the answer is encouraging people to be honest, yet respectful and flexible about their desires. For many people, mainstream porn seems to function as sex education -- and that can be a real problem, because mainstream porn shows a very specific stereotype of sexuality. But if more people had better and more complete sex education, then more people would recognize that mainstream porn is a very limited and particular product, and they'd also recognize that most people aren't interested in actually enacting that style of sexuality. I also think porn probably receives an unfair portion of the blame in these debates. It's possible that the current ubiquity of porn is partly to blame for "sex-crazy nympho dreamgirl" anxieties, but there are plenty of other stereotype sources in our culture -- I wish that all the people who talk about banning porn would also talk about banning romantic comedies!

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I'm Not Your Sex-Crazy Nympho Dreamgirl

There's this cultural image of what it means to be female, and good in bed. The image includes being young and thin and cisgendered of course, and that can be problematic. But it also includes a lot of behavioral stuff: the way you squirm, the way you moan, being Super Excited about everything the guy wants to do, and Always Being Up for It -- whatever "It" is. When people think about "good in bed," for a woman, that's often what they think.

Here's a short list of some things I think are totally awesome:

+ Squirming and moaning during sex in a genuine way, out of genuine pleasure!

+ Acting Super Excited when your partner wants to do something you're actually Super Excited about!

+ Being up for sexual experimentation and trying new things, while keeping track of your boundaries and saying no (or calling your safeword) to sexual things you really don't like!

Those things are great. They're great when they happen in all kinds of sex, and I have no problem with how people experience or deal with with those things -- whether people get them from vanilla or S&M sex, or porn, or sex with multiple people, or queer sex, or whatever. All consensual sex is fine with me. (In particular, in pieces like the one you're about to read, I often have to make it really clear that I'm not anti-porn. OK? I'm not anti-porn. Got that? Say it with me now: Clarisse Thorn is not anti-porn. Yay, it rhymes!)

What scares me, however--what continuously gets my goat, what still occasionally makes me feel weird about sex -- is how easy it is to **perform** those three things I listed above. Because I have always, since before I even started having sex, known exactly **what I was supposed to look like** while I had sex. I don't even know how I internalized those images: some of them through porn, I suppose, or art or erotica or what have you; some of them by reading sex tips on the Internet or hearing the ones whispered to me by friends. But I can definitely assure you that before I had any actual sexual partners, I knew how to give a good blowjob. I also knew how to tilt my head back and moan, and I knew how to twist my body, and I knew what my reactions and expressions were supposed to look and sound like -- I knew all those things much better than I knew what would make me react.

There was a while there, where my sexuality was mostly performance: an image, an act, a shell that I created because I knew it was hot for my partners. I'm not saying I was performing 100% of the time -- but certainly, when I was just starting to have sex, that's mostly what it was. And, scarily, I can put the shell back on at any time. Sometimes it's hard to resist, because I know men will **reward** me for it, emotionally, with affection and praise. It's much, much more difficult to get what I actually want out of a sexual interaction than it is for me to create that sexy dreamgirl shell: hard for me to communicate my desires, hard for me to know what I'm thinking, hard for me to set boundaries.

And hard to believe that a guy will like me as much, if I try to be honest about what I want. Honesty means that sometimes I'm confused, and sometimes we have to Talk About It; honesty means that sometimes I say no, it means that sometimes I'm not Up For It. Something in me is always asking: *Surely he'd prefer the sexy, fake, plastic dreamgirl shell?* It's not true, I know it's not true, I swear it's not true -- I don't have such a low opinion of men as that. I know this is just a stereotype, the idea that men are emotionally stunted horndogs with no interest in how their partners feel.

So sometimes, I have to fight myself not to perform. But it's worth it -- because the hardest thing of all is feeling locked into an inauthentic sexuality. I tell myself, I try to

force myself to believe it: even **if** a guy would like me more for faking and holding back and being so-called "low-maintenance" -- I tell myself it's a stereotype, but even if that stereotype is true of some men -- **no man is worth doing that to myself**. No man is worth that trapped, false, sick feeling.

* * *

Being a sex and S&M writer sometimes increases my performance anxiety. Occasionally I'll meet guys who seem to think I am equipped to give any man the Night Of His Life -- and that this is my goal at all times. Sometimes I feel like I should grab certain guys by the shoulders and shake them and say, "**I am not your sex-crazy nympho dreamgirl!** I'm a real person and I have real preferences, I do not exist just as your fantasy fodder!" But if I really like a guy and he's read some of my work, then I feel less irritation than concern that I won't stack up. It increases the urge to go all Sexy Dreamgirl Shell, rather than attempting to communicate.

Being a sex-positive feminist, I also sometimes worry that other women will read my work and it will increase **their** performance anxiety. I worry that writing about some stuff I like will be misinterpreted -- that it will lead other women to feel like, *gosh, is this something liberated sex-positive women do? Is this something I "should" be doing?* With some things I write, I get afraid that I've contributed to a nightmare world where women are "liberated" **only in the sense that we can better perform for men**.

I once read a blog post by a radical feminist writer in which she claimed that women always hate fellatio because it's always degrading and disgusting. She wrote something along the lines of, "I say this for the women and girls who believe that they have to do it." Part of me felt frustrated by the way she refused to acknowledge that some women really do **like** performing fellatio (and many other women don't love it, but don't mind doing it as long as they have great sex otherwise). In some ways, it felt like that writer was policing sexuality. But I empathized with her goal: She wanted women who don't like fellatio to relax; she wanted to help them recognize what they don't like. She wanted to decrease their performance anxiety.

I'd like to do the same thing, but I generally prefer to speak from personal experience rather than making claims about others' experience. Accordingly, I've often thought that it would be great if more sex-positive feminists would make lists of Things We, Personally, Don't Like. It's not the easiest project to sell, because one of the big goals of being sex-positive is to destigmatize sexuality and decrease shame. But if we destigmatize sexuality without encouraging good boundaries, then we're not moving forward; we're just creating more bad standards.

So hey, here's an example of a common sexual thing that I don't like: swallowing after giving oral sex. I love fellatio most of the time, and I like it when partners come in my mouth, but I really hate swallowing. In the past I've found a variety of creative ways to deal with this problem, some of which were hot (according to me, anyway) -- but usually I just spit it out in the closest sink. (The reason I don't like swallowing is that it makes me physically ill. No, I am not interested in your armchair theories about why this happens; evidence so far implies a physical cause, not a psychological one.)

A more complicated example would be facials. As a sex-crazy nympho dreamgirl, I am supposed to love all facials all the time, to which I say: Bah. I'm occasionally into degradation scenes, and facials feel really degrading to me, so there are circumstances in which a guy can come on my face and it'll be hot -- but those circumstances are rare. I've got to **really** respect him and **really** trust him, and I've got to be really turned on and excited about whatever scene we're playing out. And if a guy were to give me a facial without clearing it with me at some point ahead of time? Serious boundary violation. Not cool.

Have I destroyed your image of me as your sex-crazy nympho dreamgirl? Good.

I think that people of all genders receive a lot of unconscious training about how we can damage ourselves in exchange for the attention of the opposite sex. By writing about my own experience, I don't mean to discount the experiences of others. I get that many guys feel locked into acting confident and dominant, and that lots of guys hate that role as much as I hate my Sexy Dreamgirl Shell. I get that many women genuinely enjoy **reclaiming** the Sexy Dreamgirl image, and making it their own; hell, I do it myself sometimes. (Yes, I do it myself sometimes. Sex is complicated.)

People **of all genders** have a hard time figuring out what turns them on. Authenticity is hard -- and sexual authenticity gets harder when you're feeling low, or you really like someone and really want that person to like you, or when you feel bombarded with messages about how you've got to "compete" in a harsh sexual "marketplace." I believe that one of the best ways to authenticity is to seek understanding of the pressures on everyone, and to grasp that everyone's got their own nightmare of the Sexy Dreamgirl Shell.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/05/27/im-not-your-sex-crazy-nympho-dreamgirl/

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BOUNDARIES:

[storytime] Orgasms Aren't My Favorite Part Of Sex, and My Chastity Urge

These two articles were both written and published at OffOurChests.com after I published "A Unified Theory of Orgasm." The first was a followup to "A Unified Theory of Orgasm," and the second wasn't, but when I reviewed the two articles later, I concluded that they deal with fundamentally the same issues and belong together.

Interestingly, when I posted this to my blog, most of the comments didn't come from women; they came from men who agreed that orgasms aren't their favorite part of sex, either.

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Orgasms Aren't My Favorite Part Of Sex, and My Chastity Urge

My previous piece "A Unified Theory of Orgasm" was really well-received, and a lot of people have thanked me for writing it. As always, though, there's some mixed feedback too. And I've been worried about one thing in particular: it seems like a lot of people missed the part in my article where I said that, now that I've learned how to have orgasms... **orgasms aren't even my favorite part of sex**. It's a long article, and I can see how people would miss that, but I did say it and I think it's important.

It may be ironic that I spent so much time feeling terrible and broken and depressed because I couldn't figure out how to have orgasms... whereas now I prefer not to focus on them. In fact, **I estimate that *most* of my current sexual encounters don't include my orgasm, and *very few* of my most pleasurable sexual encounters have included my orgasm**.

I'm the first to admit that I don't know everything about sex, and there's a lot that I haven't experienced. Anything might change. But seriously. The best sex I've had in my life has been connective and emotional and, for me personally, has frequently involved intense BDSM. My favorite sex so far? Has also mostly been orgasm-free.

Some people in some sex-related communities have asserted that for maximum amorous power, it's actually best to limit one's orgasms, because then the contained sexual energy ends up channeling into a deeper connection with one's partner. I can see that. For me, another way of thinking about it is that I'm really into being teased -- and I'd rather experience hours of being teased without an orgasm, than have a quick encounter that ends in orgasm.

And.... (Oh no, I can already tell this is going to get complicated... but hey, sex is complicated, so I'll give it a shot.).... Especially when I'm doing BDSM, it can actually be hot sometimes if I don't have an orgasm. For example: if I go to sleep so turned on that I can't dream about anything but my partner, and then I wake up in a damp mess, and then my partner makes my life difficult all morning, it's pretty awesome. (Although it's very nice that I know how to give myself orgasms now, because that means that if I'm really feeling overwhelmed by my own sexual energy, I know how to give myself release if I have to. You know, like... if I need to get some work done.)

Aaaaand... here's the most painful, ridiculous, circular irony of all. Ready? Here goes: now that I'm capable of having orgasms, I've found myself occasionally having orgasms **only to satisfy my partner**. How absurd is that? Plus, I know I'm not alone, because I've talked to other women who do the same thing!

I've written before that in the past I've felt trapped by fake plastic ideas of "what hot girls look like during sex"; I've written about how the pressure to "perform" my sexuality can hurt. What has amazed me, as I've gotten older, is just how pervasive that pressure can feel with some partners... and how little pressure there is with other partners. The question of how to create a low-pressure environment for sexuality to flourish is big and complicated, so let me just say here that although I'm all about people giving each other orgasms... it's no good if my partner's desire to give me an orgasm turns into pressure for

me to have an orgasm!

Scarleteen, my favorite sex education site, has a great article about "squirting" orgasms and how some women feel pressured to "squirt" for the sake of the sexual "novelty." On a similar note, I'll close this post with an anecdote about a guy I dated a while back who was very focused on giving me orgasms. To his credit, he figured out how to make me come very quickly. But the problem was that -- I soon realized -- **the biggest reason he wanted to make me come was because he wanted to feel like he could**. Fundamentally, it wasn't about my pleasure; it was about him feeling like "the man."

Let me be clear: he was a great guy, and I was into having sex with him. But it became very obvious to me that if I didn't have an orgasm every time we had sex, then he would be really bothered. So there were definitely a few encounters where, although I wasn't especially interested in having an orgasm, I still closed my eyes and flicked through fantasies with a kind of panic... until I managed to kick-start my body into coming. Isn't that messed up?

One thing I've learned, in years of writing about sex and gender, is that anything -- anything at all -- can be a tool for limiting or stifling sexuality... just as much as it can be a tool for releasing sexuality. Turns out, orgasms are no exception. Even orgasms can become a difficult duty. **I'm so glad that I know how to have an orgasm now; for me, that was an important step for my sexuality and my self-esteem. But now that I've learned how to do that, I find myself questioning why it's such an important and destructive issue in the first place!**

Sex is a journey. There are so many directions, so many forks in the road, so many stops along the way. There are so many speedbumps and roadblocks, uphills and downhills, free and easy open stretches. Sometimes people stop to rest. Sometimes people double back. Everything is evolving. A lot of people find it most awesome to simply... enjoy the road.

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When I was in my late teens, I had a couple straight lady friends who did this thing where they took a year of chastity... although they had already had a fair amount of sex. It wasn't that they thought sex was bad. It wasn't that they especially disliked sex. It wasn't that they regretted choosing to have sex previously. But these women felt powerfully drawn towards taking a year away from sex, a year where no sex happened in their lives... and I instinctively understood **because I felt the same urge**. In fact, I came up with the idea of deliberately taking a year of chastity on my own, before I heard that anyone else was doing it.

I'm not telling you this because I want to sound like one of the "cool kids"; I'm not trying to say anything like, "I was into chastity when it was underground!" As it happened, I never actually went through with my chastity urge. But I thought about it a lot, and I thought about the fact that other girls I knew were doing it. We didn't have backgrounds that one would normally consider anti-sex. We had liberal backgrounds, liberal parents, liberal educations. Why were we so attracted to the idea of taking a year without sex?

I thought about it a lot, and I concluded this: **We felt like we didn't own our sexuality**.

We felt like our sexuality wasn't for us. Or at least, that's how I felt.

Even though on the surface it looked like I was totally in charge of my sexual decisions, there were social pressures and expectations that made me feel overwhelmed and confused. Not always, and not all the time! But enough that there were plenty of times that I just felt like all I wanted to do was **stop** and be done with it... "take my body back" from a world that seemed intent on constantly telling me how I must look, how I must dress, how I must have sex.

I've written about how much easier it was for me to learn how I ought to look and "perform" while having sex, than it was for me to learn what I actually wanted from sex. That, I think, is where the chastity urge came from for me. That, and the way I kept finding myself making out with guys who I had zero interest in because it was "too awkward to say no." Or the way I didn't feel like I could decide not to have sex with my boyfriends; not because I didn't think my boyfriend would listen if I said no, but because his potentially hurt feelings seemed so much more important than my bodily preferences.

So many things about the way I was having sex seemed to have nothing to do with me. And if sex had nothing to do with me... then why was I doing it? I guess I wanted to reassure myself that I could take control of at least one thing: saying no.

Eventually, I got a better handle on my sexual preferences and began to learn how to talk about them. It was a long process, and my sexual journey is far from over (yay!). There were people who showed me what it meant to have a low-pressure sexual relationship; there were people who made it easy for me to talk about sex; and there were other people who made it easy for me to turn them down, sexually, which was just as important.

But one interesting thing during the beginning of my learning process... especially given that I now really emphasize and encourage talking directly about sex... was that I felt like a couple of my boyfriends really, really didn't want to talk about sex. And while sometimes this was clearly terrible and toxic, sometimes it felt good. It felt safe. I wanted to be sexual, but I also felt so much pressure to be sexual that it sometimes felt like a huge relief to just... "not worry about it."

In retrospect, though, I think that the "safety" I felt when I didn't talk about sex with certain partners was a mirage. It was a false safety, sustained by a carefully crafted mutual fiction of the relationship. When we ended up talking about sex later, "giving up that safety" just made the conversation unnecessarily scary and weird. And the independent illusions we each had about our sexual relationship flourished and grew strong within our silence. Those illusions were so much harder to release after months of self-reinforcement than they would have been if we'd dragged them into the light from the beginning!

Occasionally, I wonder how it would have felt if I'd taken that deliberate year of chastity. I wonder which of my early experiences would have changed; I wonder whether a year of chastity would have made me feel more comfortable with my sexuality sooner. I'm very happy with how I feel sexually now. I sometimes feel confused or overwhelmed, but I think I'm okay at handling that and even talking about it. Yet I do wonder how it would have felt to draw such a strong boundary; to say such a strong "No" to the world and its

messed-up sexual expectations.

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This post can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/02/02/orgasms-arent-my-favorite-part-of-sex-and-my-chastity-urge/

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BOUNDARIES:

[theory] Anger, Fear and Pain

I wrote this post in late 2010. The comments on the online version are especially good, with a lot of people sharing their own experience of these emotions in S&M encounters. So if you have an interest in the topic, this is a good post to review online.

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Anger, Fear and Pain

I like pain. I like submission. What do these things actually mean, though? I don't like it when I stub my toe, for example, and there are quite a lot of authoritarian situations I don't like either. My emotional reactions, in particular, can get really complicated. So I need more precise words than "I like pain" and "I like submission."

This is not a new problem, and around the BDSM subculture there are more precise terms that are frequently used. But when I was first exploring BDSM and didn't yet have access to the community, I started coming up with my own vocabulary for what I liked and what I didn't like. The primary words I came up with -- words that I still use a lot in my own head, and that I sometimes try to explain to my partners -- were "clean" pain and "dirty" pain.

I think of some pain as "clean" because even if it's intense, I usually... like it. (For lack of a better word.) This is the kind of pain I fantasize about when I'm really craving BDSM. There are certain places on my body that take pain more cleanly -- my upper arms, most of my back, my thighs. There are certain types of pain that are inherently more clean -- needles come to mind. Wide, deep, blunt bites are good too. Heavy whips made of weighty materials, like suede. Pulling my hair right above the nape of my neck.

On the other hand, I think of some pain as "dirty" because it's... harder to take. I don't think of it as dirty because I see it as scandalous or perverse -- rather, dirty pain is complex and hard to process. I never fantasize about it. Pain where my bones are close to the surface of my skin, like my collarbone, is dirty. Pain on top of scars is dirty. Pinches and small, narrow bites are dirty. Pulling my hair anywhere besides the nape of my neck is dirty. Electric shocks are extremely dirty.

But this whole "clean" and "dirty" thing, it doesn't make any sense outside my own body, my own head. It's hard to explain it. It helps that the BDSM community tends to frame pain in terms of techniques and less-subjective adjectives, using words like "sharp" or "sting" or "thud." (A lot of people think of "sharp" and "sting" as the same sensation. I usually separate them a bit more, but I'm not sure how many other people separate them.)

The BDSM and polyamory writer Franklin Veaux defines "thud" as "sensation of heavy, dull impact" and defines "sting" as "sensation of quick, sharp pain." These words are most often applied to floggers (implements for hitting people, e.g.: "this is a thuddy flogger"), but sometimes the words are used for other things too. I've found that I generally prefer thuddy-type pain, for example, but it took me a long time to figure that out, because there are so many specific sharp sensations that I love.

Okay. Now for emotions. This is the really hard part.

A while back I got an anonymous comment on my coming-out story that I absolutely love. Here's a quotation from the comment:

When it came to it, very little about the reality [of BDSM] matched my fantasies. Oh, sometimes what we did matched the way a real-life even can match a fantasy. There were moments that were... Transcendental.

But there were many more moments that... were deeply, deeply conflicted. I NEVER expected to feel that much... anger... toward someone dominating me and inflicting pain. I expected it to be a relief. I didn't expect to wrestle with hatred.

He liked to slap my face. Everytime he did it I would feel this burst of pure hatred. At one point he asked if I liked it. I said, "No. I hate it. But I don't want you to stop doing it."

I can't remember right now if any other "coming out" story I've ever read included such a visceral description of anger. Of course, I think the last time I read one I hadn't experienced it myself. Maybe I never noticed it before, but noticed it this time because it resonated with me. But mostly I remember those stories mentioning fear, shame, worry, and embarrassment.

The events in my coming-out story took place years ago, and my feelings about BDSM are really different now. I remember that I was conflicted, furious, resentful. But at the same time, I have often thought that much of my anger and resentment was due to the fact that Richard -- my first intense BDSM partner -- was not emotionally available. I needed support that he didn't give me. (To some extent because neither he nor I recognized how much support I needed.) And, of course, much of that anger was due to the fact that I couldn't deal with BDSM. I was fighting back against my sexuality, and felt unable to take ownership of it.

As I settled my feelings and reconciled myself to my sexual identity, my emotional reactions became a whole different ball game. (It helped that I dated a string of men who were more emotionally available and assisted me with emotional processing, too.) It turned out that the rage that I had suspected was inextricable from BDSM was, in fact, entirely possible to separate. I entered a stage where I learned how to avoid that anger. To work around it. I learned to sink myself into fear and desperation, which I love, and

which are easier to work with.

I experimented with different types of submissive play. One thing I've learned is that it's almost impossible for me to feel submissive unless someone hurts me. (There have been exceptions, but they were definitely exceptional.) The BDSM community has lots of jargon for interpersonal emotional encounters, but those words usually describe actions or scenarios rather than feelings, like "public humiliation" or "domestic servitude" or "sexual slavery." So I had to learn which emotions are associated with which actions, and that's complicated too, though some things are just obvious. Some people really get off on public humiliation, for example, but that's a strong and instinctive limit for me because it makes me extraordinarily angry. (There have been exceptions, but they were definitely exceptional.)

I got better at calling out my safeword when I had to. Yes, I think it's hard to use a safeword, especially when you're new... for all kinds of reasons: you don't want to disappoint your partner, and sometimes it's hard to realize that you need to safeword, because it's very difficult to keep track of how you're feeling in the moment... but I also think that calling a safeword when you need to stop is a skill that you can get better at, much like other kinds of boundary-setting. So I became fairly practiced at calling my safeword when I needed to. If I started feeling very angry, I got good at halting the encounter, or shifting the emphasis to something else instead.

As I gained a more precise understanding of my physical reactions -- clean pain and dirty pain -- I figured out that there are differences in emotional reactions, too. Loosely speaking: clean pain makes me feel afraid and submissive, whereas dirty pain makes me mad. (Though this isn't always true. I hate spanking, for example; it irritates me; but it's pretty clean pain. And it might be worth noting how much I hate tickling... but that doesn't hurt.)

If the dirty pain is hard or unexpected enough, I can't seem to control lashing out. I fight back without even thinking about it (which often functions just fine as a way of renegotiating the encounter, in itself, without safewording). If it's mild? I just get annoyed. But if it's intense... I don't just struggle, I attack. I leave marks on my partners.

I learned to avoid dirty pain, usually. I learned to circumvent anger, usually. I had once seen anger, and dirty pain, as maybe being an unavoidable cost of BDSM. I once suspected that I might never be able to have a BDSM relationship where I didn't feel anger, where I didn't feel pain that I didn't want. I was wrong. Those things aren't unavoidable costs. They can be worked around.

But now.... Yes, now! We've reached the part of the entry where Clarisse makes statements about her current self and potential future actions that may or may not be true and should be treated with caution, because she is an evolving and complicated human...!

Now that I've built up all these frameworks, I've had a few encounters lately where I felt... a lot of anger. Sometimes connected to dirty pain; sometimes not. And I didn't stop. I watched how I was feeling and I dealt with it while it was happening, and it was... worth watching. It was hard to take, oh, it was so hard to take. But it was also intense and fascinating.

I've heard from a few other BDSM submissives that they like feeling anger during their encounters, that they need anger in order to get where they want to go.

If I follow the thread of anger, now....

Where will it take me?

* * *

This post can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2010/12/26/anger-fear-and-pain/

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EVOLUTION:

[theory] Sexual Openness: Two Ways To Encourage It

This was written in 2010, and it amazes me how I've changed since then.

I don't like to talk about people being "further along" in their sexual experimentation than others; people are simply in different places, based on their preferences and experiences. I look at this piece now and I think that maybe it would be better-written if I'd tried to talk about sexual evolution in a more neutral way. However, it's undeniable that when I was younger, I often felt like I was somehow "held up" or "inhibited," and I no longer feel that way about sex. And I do think that in general, lots of people want to explore but aren't sure how to overcome their own hesitance and psychological blocks. Some of them even write to me for advice, and I can only tell them what worked for me: the approach I outlined in this post.

* * *

Sexual Openness: Two Ways To Encourage It

I've been thinking a lot lately about the factors that went into my sexual evolution. People have always seen me as sexually open-minded, and I had an extraordinarily liberal upbringing... but at the same time, I think I spent a long time surprisingly buttoned-up.

Part of it was the men I fell in love with, the partners I had. Monogamy felt right to me, and that effectively meant that once I was in a relationship, it was hard to explore sexuality beyond what my lovers were comfortable with. I've often looked back in frustration at sexual shame and inhibitions that I feel were imposed on me by some past partners. But at the same time, **there's no denying that -- even when my partners were relatively inhibited -- I was with those men partly because I felt comfortable with them**. I recall conversations in which I felt frustrated at a lover's unwillingness to explore or discuss certain things... but I also recall times when I felt relieved that they were willing to leave those things alone.

How did I evolve through that balance and come into the place where I am today, where my sexual boundaries have shifted dramatically? I'm up for trying things just to see what they're like; I routinely have fantasies that would have appalled me in my teens; and I routinely have orgasms as well.... But why is it that, for example, I'm very interested in having multiple partners now, but wasn't at all interested a few years ago? Why did I initially swear I'd never wear a collar, then end up associating collars with profound sexual love? How is it that I initially considered myself solely a submissive but later transitioned into an enthusiastic switch (i.e., both a sub and a domme)?

Here are the **two factors that, I think, facilitate sexual evolution and openness**:

1) ***A pressure-free environment***

This is key! A person **can** be pressured into sexual exploration, but in my experience it won't "take." Many people (though not all) who feel pressure react by becoming defensive and unwilling to change; even if they do try the experiment, they're less likely to enjoy it. And someone who has a bad sexual experience will often have trouble enjoying that kind of sex in the future.

Take me, for example -- there were a lot of reasons why I felt less willing to experiment with polyamory (multiple relationships) when I was 20, but one of the big ones is that I felt lots of **pressure** to be poly. Because I ran in highly "alternative" social circles, I was meeting "polyvangelists" who argued that polyamory is the "best" kind of relationship and that anyone who doesn't want to try poly is just being selfish or close-minded. **General social pressure exerts an influence, so it helps to have open-minded friends who accept different forms of consensual sexuality** -- which doesn't just mean that "vanilla" people would do well to accept those of us who are "non-standard," but also means that even people in "alternative" circles have to accept "mainstream" sexuality.

But in my experience, the actual **sexual relationships are the most relevant aspect of life that must be sexually pressure-free**. They're also one of the most difficult, especially when the stakes are high: if one or both parties are helplessly in love, if they are married, if they have children, if they live together... then it becomes very hard to make the relationship pressure-free. A husband who is afraid that his wife might leave him is more likely to do sexual things for her that make him uncomfortable because he wants her to stay, for example -- even if she doesn't ask him to. A girl who is totally in love with her boyfriend is more likely to acquiesce to sex that she's not really into, because of course she wants to please him -- but she is simultaneously unlikely to tell him outright that she's not into it.

And then there's the fact that what feels like "pressure" for each person will be different depending on that person's triggers, the relationship, and the time in their life. Today, I feel totally comfortable setting limits and clearly telling my partner "no" if he asks me to do something I don't want to do... but it wasn't so long ago that I'd feel anxiety-inducing pressure to do something if my boyfriend merely mentioned that he liked it. Which brings me to my next point: **there's a fine line between sharing and pressure**. One must be careful when bringing up one's own preferences and desires -- which isn't to say one shouldn't bring them up! Merely that it's important to recognize that these are difficult topics, and when we discuss them with people we love or admire, there's lots of potential

for accidental anxious pressure.

Okay, I'm talking pretty theoretically, right? So here's some actual concrete advice on how to avoid imposing sexual pressure:

* **Don't demand that people explain their preferences**. A person doesn't have to explain, examine, or "figure out" why they're gay, straight, kinky, polyamorous, or whatever if they don't want to. Even your sexual partner doesn't have to explain why they don't want to do something if they don't want to.

In fact, it may be very helpful if you merely make it clear that your partner doesn't have to explain from the beginning -- because they may feel as if they ought to, even if you don't ask. I so clearly remember an encounter I had a few years ago in which my partner asked what I was up for and I said, hesitantly, "Well, I'm not really up for sex tonight... I can't really explain it, I --" and he held up his hand. "You don't have to explain it," he said -- and I was totally shocked at the gratitude, relief and comfort that poured through me.

I later felt proud and thrilled to "pay it forward" when I had my first serious encounter as a dominant. Towards the end of the encounter, I asked, "Do you want me?" and my submissive stiffened, saying awkwardly, "Yes, I do, but... I don't want to have sex so soon, it's just one of my own boundaries, I --" and I saw how much the words were costing him. Saw the same anxiety I'd felt once. And immediately I covered his mouth and said, "Shh, it's fine, you don't have to explain it," and I saw him relax with the same terrible relief I'd once felt. And then we made out for many hours and it was unbelievably awesome.

... Of course, **sometimes people will want to examine their own preferences, which is obviously fine**! But if your partner or friend is examining for their own mental well-being, that's very different from demanding that they examine to satisfy you. Bottom line: they don't owe you an explanation, and asking for one may just make them tense up and feel totally unsexy in all ways.

* **Express preferences gently**. I once attended an incredible BDSM workshop by the author Laura Antoniou in which she offered an outline for bringing up your filthiest, scariest fantasy with your partner: "Buy ice cream. Sit down at the kitchen table and describe your fantasy. Then say, 'Don't say anything now. I'll give you some time to think about it -- now let's eat this ice cream and maybe go out for a movie.'" I love this advice because (a) everyone gets ice cream and (b) it's so perfect for lowering tension. And as Laura said, "The worst thing that can happen is that they're not into it."

[Editor's Note: since writing this post, Clarisse went vegan, and she recommends eating that frozen Coconut Bliss stuff instead of ice cream. The chocolate flavor is absurdly delicious.]

It's important to emphasize from the start: "This is something I'm interested it, but it's not a requirement and I don't want you to do it if you're not into it." In fact, it might help to begin by saying those exact words.

And if your partner doesn't want to do something now, it's often worth giving time for them to grow into the idea. Perhaps by exploring other sexual angles, they'll come around

to yours. I remember that when I was in my late teens, one boyfriend asked me if I'd be up for a certain kind of sex, and I refused. (He asked very gently, and didn't pressure me when I said no, which made me feel much safer and happier with him!) At the time I couldn't imagine ever wanting to do it. Then a few years later -- after I'd gained a lot more sexual experience -- I ended up asking my boyfriend to try it! I'm convinced that if my previous partner had pressured me, I wouldn't have come around to it so easily years later -- and if he and I had still been together, then maybe we would have even done it together.

... But of course, the difficult part here is that sexual needs are important, and can't be put on the back burner indefinitely. If you have sexual needs that are being routinely ignored -- or can't be fulfilled -- by your partner, then it's obviously not desirable to keep gently saying, "Don't worry, I can do without this." Still, I think that if you're approaching ultimatum territory -- for example, if you are tempted to say that "If you can't satisfy this need, then I need an open relationship so I can find someone who can, or else we have to break up" -- then it's best to at least state the ultimatum gently, emphasize that you care about your partner and this is difficult, and steel yourself to act quickly in case you have to go through with your ultimatum. And, of course, to understand that this could make sexuality with your partner more difficult if you keep trying to date through ultimatum territory.

Sadly, **sexual pressure can sometimes be simply unavoidable. Sometimes the best we can do is be gentle, understanding, and prepared to face the consequences.**

2) ***Exposure to new conceptions of sexuality, sexual mentors, and sex education***

Many gay people say they're "wired" for a certain approach to sexuality, but there's also others, such as some BDSMers, who consider ourselves to be innately kinky. And we often say that we would have come to those sexual conclusions and practices whether we had examples before us, or not. (Even so, it's really helpful to have a community sharing tips and emotional support, especially when it comes to alternative sexuality. It might seem like sex will come naturally and obviously, but sometimes non-obvious things can really trip you up!)

Still, there are lots of sexual ideas are worth exploring and wouldn't necessarily occur to us if we didn't have examples before us: erotica, pornography, friends and mentors, workshops and educational materials. Here's some concrete advice on how best to emotionally access those:

* **Find a good mentor, or at least a friend or social group, to talk about sex with -- who you don't want to have sex with**. Being able to honestly discuss turn-ons in a neutral environment is invaluable, as is someone who can guide and advise without inserting their preferences and desires into the conversation. Naturally, it's entirely possible to have a good sexual relationship with a sexual mentor -- and sometimes, mentor (or friend) relationships evolve in unexpectedly sexual ways. But it can be very useful to take that element out of at least some relationships.

One piece of advice that I love is for mentors to be the same "type." That is, for example, if you're a heterosexual female submissive, it's awesome to have an experienced

heterosexual female submissive mentor if possible.

This post was edited to add the next paragraph: In the comments, Ranai pointed out that it's not always a great idea to have just one mentor -- and I agree with her. I think it's helpful to have a range of voices who can give advice, if possible. There's nothing wrong with trusting one person above others, but all humans have their blind spots, and mentors are human too. This is one thing I love about the BDSM community, by the way (or at least, my experience with the BDSM communities I have been part of -- not all BDSM communities are the same...). In many BDSM communities, there are many cafe meetups and other low-pressure gatherings that make perfect environments for getting this kind of advice!

* **Not all BDSM -- or porn -- or whatever! -- is the same**. If you don't like (or are even revolted by) something you see, then you can try watching (or reading, or talking about) something else. Me, I got really excited when I first learned about Comstock Films: Tony Comstock makes documentaries that show real couples having real sex, and his documentaries are much more realistic and comfortably sexual than mainstream porn. And I **really** didn't like mainstream porn. But then I found that I wasn't that into Comstock Films themselves, even though I love the idea so much that I screened one of the movies at my sex-positive film series. So I concluded that I'm just not into porn at all, and that I'd be better off to focus on written erotica.

But **then** I finally saw some porn that turned me on at CineKink, "the really alternative film festival" -- and I hadn't even expected it to turn me on! I'd just been watching out of academic interest! And these days, I find that I'm sometimes turned on by watching the mainstream porn I tried so hard to avoid in the first place. The moral of the story is obvious.

The bottom line is that **mere exposure to new ideas about sexuality can bring personal sexual evolution** -- and that's awesome. So if you're interested in facilitating your own sexual evolution, the first thing to do is learn about sexuality by whatever means possible.

* * *

This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2010/05/28/sexual-openness-2-ways-to-encourage-it/

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RELATIONSHIPS:

[storytime] Fear, Loathing, and S&M Sluthood in San Francisco

I originally wrote this and published it at OffOurChests.com in late 2010. If you've read Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser, *or any of my posts that refer to "Adam," then I probably don't have to tell you which of these men later turned into Adam. But I'll spoil the mystery for you, and tell you outright that Mr. ThereItIs is Adam. (In this entry, I*

named him after the post I wrote when I met him: "There It Is.")

* * *

Fear, Loathing, and S&M Sluthood in San Francisco

Since I was small, I've loved the Van Gogh painting "Starry Night." I loved the cypresses in particular: winding spiral trees, hallucination trees. They were so unlike other trees I'd seen that I thought Van Gogh made them up, and so when I first saw cypresses years later, I was stunned: the hallucination trees had been imported into my world. I'd like to think that my world turned a little bit sideways forever, when I first saw cypresses, but I'm probably being melodramatic. (I'm good at that.)

San Francisco has cypresses, and a lot of other hallucinations, too. The city is full of angles, vantages, transitions, unceasing changing views: it feels, at times, like an unsolvable puzzle. A forested path leads darkly under a bridge, suddenly opens upon a manicured lawn with a white lace conservatory. A cement staircase rises through a narrow outlet, resolving itself step by step into a slice of brightly painted Victorian facade. I walked once with a friend alongside an ocean road, pacing through thick fog, and arrived at a dirt path that I insisted on following; thirty seconds later we stumbled upon extraordinary ruins.

San Francisco. Halcyon city, heartbreak city. Cypress city. The place I come to recover from being torn apart and, it seems, sometimes the place where I get torn apart again. This is okay with me, because nothing is more fun than overanalyzing strong emotions. I am not even kidding.

* * *

I returned from Africa recently; paused briefly in my adopted city of Chicago to collect my thoughts; and then went to the Burning Man Arts Festival, thence to San Francisco. This is my version of emotional decompression, and it worked! I feel much more centered now. But part of decompressing, for me, was specifically going out to a **lot** of dates and BDSM parties and pushing my own boundaries, which carries its own potential decompressable risks.

At the time of this story, it had been a couple of months in San Francisco, and I was leaving soon. I'd had an assortment of adventures, but there were two guys in particular who I was excited about. Not necessarily in a long-term way -- I'm not in this for the white picket fence and the 2.5 kids (or at least, not yet) -- but definitely in a wow-I-have-to-control-myself-or-I'll-come-off-as-kind-of-puppyish way. New Relationship Energy: it is such a mind trick, such a delicious head-trip. *You are the perfect drug.*

I had to control myself less when I first hooked up with The Artist: possibly the most postmodern individual I've ever met, possibly the most creative, who I've loosely been friends with for six whole years, and who has never ceased to fascinate me. It is hard for me to meet people who keep me thinking, but The Artist never disappoints. If anything, our problem was shifting a cerebral connection into a sexual one: the first time we made out, I absolutely **had** to interrupt the proceedings because I'd forgotten to tell him about this great sociology paper. It was okay to show how much I liked him because we'd

known each other for so long, it was easier to read the situation, easier to allow investment. Much harder with Mr. ThereItIs, who came out of nowhere, who I barely knew but had awesome chemistry with. In the beginning steps of this game, you can never let them smell your fear.

Saturday morning. I'd spent the night with The Artist, was checking my email while he made breakfast. (He actually likes cooking, which I have trouble comprehending.) I wanted to plan my week, and texted Mr. ThereItIs to ask when we'd see each other. My breath hitched as he texted back: he didn't think it'd be a good idea to spend the night together again, but he wanted to have drinks and catch up. I closed my eyes, made myself breathe. Remembered how many times he'd pulled back, how much anxiety he'd expressed about the BDSM we engaged in. I'd tried to make it clear that he was doing awesomely, but dollars to donuts he was still freaking out about it. I was his first-time heavy BDSM partner. *Why do I keep doing this to myself? Haven't I learned my lesson about vanilla-but-questioning guys yet?*

After giving myself a moment to calm down, I texted back that I was open to getting drinks, but wanted to understand his motives better before doing so. "Feel free to email or text," I wrote, "I can't talk right now," then put down my phone and walked into an intense conversation in the kitchen. There'd been some uncertainty over my last month or so with The Artist, due to surprisingly divergent relationship priorities. We're decently matched in terms of being BDSM-identified, and we have so much else in common, but there were some things I wanted to do that particularly freaked him out, plus he wasn't feeling 100% comfortable with polyamory. Most of all, I've been surprised by his emphasis on settling down.

That Saturday, it ended with him deciding it wouldn't work. "You and I are in such different places right now," he said gently. "You're still focused on having an interesting life. I'm not prioritizing that anymore. I would have been a much better match for you five years ago."

You're one of the most interesting people I've ever met, I wanted to say, *how can you decide this?* The night before, we'd had a conversation in which he'd described how incredibly stable he wants his life to be. Well-designed apartment, respected job, kids, the lot. How much he wants to get away from past days, when he thrived among bizarre subcultures, prioritized art above everything. He doesn't even want to travel! I listened, heart sinking. Trying to understand. "Isn't there anything you can't walk away from?" I asked.

"S&M," he said promptly. "But that bothers me, because I don't know how I can make it fit."

Stability; making things fit. Saturday at breakfast, The Artist mentioned that a friend had compared him to Alex, the main character in *A Clockwork Orange:* in the famous "lost" 21st chapter, Alex decides that it's time to abandon ultraviolence and settle down. Obviously, The Artist was never even close to being the psychopath that Alex is, but it's still an instructive parallel. And I, with all my desire to push and stretch myself, with all the boundaries I'm still seeking to subvert and hack and destroy -- I don't work with the desire to settle down. I may never work with that desire.

I understood. Of course I understood. I knew intellectually that it wasn't about me, I knew it was just about the situations at hand, but of course it hurt anyway. Two awesome men, giving me the same message at once: *This is too much, you're too extreme.* A matter of their boundaries. Not about me. Of course it hurt anyway.

"Is there anything else you want to add while we're having this conversation?" I asked The Artist finally, as we wound things up.

He thought for a minute, took my hand. "Well, you're wonderful and beautiful, but you know that."

"Do I?" I asked, and made myself laugh to take the sting from my words.

* * *

An aside:

Occasionally, my mother has tried to convince me that I am at emotional risk in part **because of** the fact that I am forward about my sexuality. Because -- I think this is how the story goes, though she's never explicitly articulated it -- because it means that men will see me as a disposable toy; the hot edgy girl he likes but would never settle down with; the whore but not the Madonna. Cute enough to catch his attention and passionate enough that he'll call her back but ultimately, not "the keeper", not the girl he'd have any loyalty to in the end. I think my mom is afraid that I'll stumble out the other end of this brilliant razor-edged fluorescent beautiful funhouse that is my "young and attractive" years, that I'll come down like a girl falling through a distorted mirrored sheet of glass. That shards will burst everywhere and I'll collapse, covered in metaphorical blood, and turn my eyes up to the harsh white stars and wonder how I let men use me and why.

This is the stereotype that I think she's afraid of, on my behalf, the one that comes up on occasion when she comforts me through heartbreak. My mother is hardly a conservative slut-shamer, but she loves me and she wants to protect me, so she tells me this. And I'll admit it -- I fear it too, I feel those anxieties whispering behind me, thrumming through my veins during times like these. *What did I mean to him? Did I matter, did I make an impression, does he give a damn? Would he be willing to Make A Commitment? He doesn't care, God, I don't matter, and I was just stupid because God forbid I allow myself to like or trust a man that I fuck, when everyone knows that men don't ever have feelings for the women they fuck --*

But actually those fears don't make sense, do they -- they don't make any sense at all if I assume that men are complex humans who want to have relationships but aren't always sure about it (much like myself), rather than sex-seeking-stereotype-activated-robots. The fears don't make sense in the context of my own experience, which is full of friends and relatives and lovers who have been caring, self-aware, honest men. The fears don't make sense given the fact that very often, **I'm** the one who prefers not to have a serious relationship right now, or who can only compromise up to a point.

And the fears especially don't make any damn sense if we assume that I want to pursue my own goals, my own dreams, my own pleasures, my own sexuality **on my own terms**. If we **assume** that I have no intention of playing by the rules in a world that tells me

women never have our own damn sexual needs; that it's wrong or wicked or dirty for women to negotiate any sexual exchange for pleasure; that women are meant to **trade** sex for "commitment" or "support" (though, bizarrely, never outright for money). If we **assume** that I can get something great from sexual relationships without Being On The Path To Marriage. That I understand and honor my sexual desires, that those desires are worth fulfilling in themselves. And if we **assume** that men have something wonderful they could bring to the sexual exchange; that they aren't always "using" or "exploiting" or "winning" some kind of sick war-of-the-sexes, every single time they fuck.

But even if the fears don't make sense, sometimes they still come out and whisper at the back of my neck... *I'm selling myself short.* As if I should have **bargained** better, should have **traded** my sexuality for far more than "mere" pleasure with someone I "merely" liked, was "merely" attracted to, who "merely" respected my boundaries and "merely" was fun to hang out with. Would some people see it as ironic that I prefer relationships with real emotional heft, even when short-term or casual? Even with that said, though, there is no description of how reasonable, safe, or awesome my relationships are that will matter to our slut-shaming society -- or to the fears it's hammered into me. Society, whose judgment of whether a girl is a "slut" can be sudden and devastating, stupid and stereotypical; a lightning strike that lands based on absurd factors like how non-normative or straightforward or aware of her sexuality she is. And once I'm a "slut" -- if I dare dance over that ever-shifting line -- then I'm beyond the pale. The world always seems to be outdoing itself in finding new ways to tell me that once I'm a slut, no man will ever respect me again.

* * *

I went home. It was raining, all across my cypress city; raining so hard, I had to take the bus instead of walking. The rain struck me as an insultingly obvious metaphor, as did the fact that I was scheduled to attend a wedding that afternoon. It seemed strange that hallucinatory San Francisco would throw such tired tropes at me. (I should have trusted the city more. It was with me, still.)

I was sad. Not devastated. Just sad, and a little bit scared. *I'm such a screwed-up perverted slut, no man will ever care about me.* However, I'm an adult, so I tried to recognize my emotional baggage, give myself some time to process, then eat a proper lunch and get some work done.

I took a very dear, very blunt friend out to dinner recently. (Yes, I paid, and yes, he felt objectified.) Over Indian curries, I tried to explain my fears that All Men (who are of course a monolith) will pigeonhole me as "too much", "too extreme." A "slut." Whatever. My friend listened, savoring his delicious lassi as he thought about what I was trying to say. Then he said, "Look, you shouldn't worry about it. You're extreme. You're also tall. You couldn't be un-tall for a man, and you can't be un-extreme. There are men who will like you just fine for it, so just keep an eye out for those men." I could detect the edge under his words: *Come on, Clarisse, you're the one who always says that People Are Different, why do I even have to tell you this?* A fair point, but I can't help it -- stories like this still shake me.

As it happens, though, this story has a happy ending.

I was about to head out to the wedding when I received an email from Mr. ThereItIs:

So my txt was not really well-considered. I was delaying writing you because I've got mixed and confusing inclinations about all this and was hoping I could figure them out before writing. So I spent last night drinking too much and ranting with friends about unrelated topics, which surprise turned out to not have helped me figure my shit out at all.

I'm just feeling intimidated and uncertain about our kinkiness. On one hand I've been feeling "aaa this is weird, run away". But I'm also feeling like this is fun and new and hot and fascinating, and I should get over my bs and try it again. So if you can forgive my impulsive txt and my erratic emotions.... I'm free on your free nights this week.

And if I've spooked you or your schedule has filled up, then I would be disappointed... but I'd understand. Sorry about the drama. I'm usually drama-free, I swear.

It was amazing how much further my internal anxieties resolved themselves upon receipt of this email: it was not only concrete evidence that men are **human beings** who are frequently **just as confused as I am**; not only concrete evidence that men are **different from each other**, and assumptions should not be made about how they're feeling; but also, it was concrete evidence that a man (a vanilla-but-questioning man, no less!) might not inevitably fall into the stereotypes that feed my fears.

I was still a little bit spooked, of course, but I did indeed see Mr. ThereItIs later that week, and it turned out great. And as I was pulling myself together to leave his apartment, I raised my eyebrows at him. "I don't know if I'll ever see you again," I said, fishing. I didn't have any nights open before I was due to catch my plane out of the city, but maybe some other time....

"You'll see me again," he obliged.

I zipped up my backpack. "I wonder why we have so much chemistry."

"I don't know," he said, "but I'll read about it on your blog when you figure it out," and he laughed and caught my wrists when I pretended to punch him. It was such a stupidly adorable moment that I am almost ashamed to write it down, but it was also such a cypress moment, I've got to mention it.

As for The Artist, we went to a charming museum a few days before I left, and had a fine old time. There was almost no tension at all. Right before we parted, we inevitably ended up discussing our brief romance, and the conversation was gloriously friendly. "No hard feelings," I said as I walked him to the bus, and meant it.

I then tried to walk away from the bus, but it turned at the same corner I did and chased me down the street. *Ack,* I couldn't help thinking, *so much for a nice clean exit.* I was suddenly possessed by ridiculous performance anxiety, knowing he could see me, so I paused and took a drag of a passing gentleman's cigarette, and then deliberately zigzagged away from the bus again.

The Artist texted me fifteen seconds later: "That puff of a cigarette looked mighty tasty."

"I needed it to relieve my feelings of being watched from the bus," I texted back, then

added impulsively, "Take care, handsome, and have lots of wonderful children."

"You too," he replied. "We'll see if I become okay with poly first, or you gain these 'adult' preferences...."

I shook my head and laughed over my phone, walked home with a spring in my step.

San Francisco had done what I needed it to do.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/04/03/storytime-fear-loathing-and-sm-sluthood-in-san-francisco/

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S&M:

[theory] BDSM As A Sexual Orientation, and Complications of the Orientation Model

The first version of this post was written in 2009. I updated it slightly and reposted it in 2012. The online version includes an evolving set of relevant links at the end.

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BDSM As A Sexual Orientation, and Complications of the Orientation Model

There's a hilarious sticker that you can buy online at a website called TopPun.com. It shows a list with "Homosexual Agenda" written at the top. The list items are: "1. Spend time with family, 2. Be treated equally, 3. Buy milk." (You can also buy a keychain version.)

I love that because it so perfectly highlights how preposterous all those right-wing accusations about "the gay agenda" are. Actually, gay people just want to live their lives like everyone else; the to-do list for most gay people looks a lot like most other people's.

In a way, that sticker also highlights some problems with the very concept of sexual orientations -- the way we sort ourselves into groups based on sexuality and its apparent innateness. Why do people have to insist on being so different from each other? A question that sometimes gets raised in BDSM contexts: is BDSM a "sexual orientation"? And I have such mixed feelings about that question. I feel intense BDSM as an incredibly important aspect of my sexuality, perhaps an innate one, but I don't want us to fall into the same traps that beset homosexuality.

I remember the first moment it occurred to me to consider BDSM an orientation -- the first time I used that word. I believe I was writing up my coming-out story at the time; I was discussing the way I freaked out when I came into BDSM, and I wrote: *In*

retrospect, it seems surreal that I reacted so badly to my BDSM orientation.

I remember that I felt vaguely electrified at what I was saying, a little scared... but also comforted. At the time, I hadn't had much contact with other sex theorists, and I thought I was saying something radical. I was scared that my words might appear too radical to be taken seriously. Also, since our culture mostly discusses the idea of "orientation" in regards to gay/ lesbian /bi /transgender /queer, it seemed to me that -- if I dared refer to it as "my BDSM orientation" -- then a comparison with LGBTQ was implied in my statement.

Would the world believe that my BDSM desires could be as "real," as "deep-rooted," as "unavoidable" as the sexual orientation of a gay/lesbian/bi/transgender/queer person? Would I offend GLBTQ people by implying that my sexual needs are as "real," "deep-rooted" and "unavoidable" as theirs?

I later found out that some LGBTQ people do get offended by it, and others don't. Sometime you end up with ridiculous arguments like this one from a comments thread on an incredibly BDSM-phobic blog: one person says, "As a lesbian, I would like to say a sincere fuck you to people comparing BDSM to homosexuality," to which another person replies, "As a queer person myself, I would like to say a sincere fuck you to people who claim that I ought to see my BDSM and my queerness differently." As for me, Clarisse, I'll be frank with you -- I've come to the conclusion that I don't have a dog in that fight, and I'm staying out of it. I'm straight as the day is long, but I've also been invited to speak about BDSM at queer conventions and to write about BDSM on queer blogs. So I'll hang out with the people who are cool with me, and everyone else can kick me out of their LGBTQ circles as much as they want.

But I used to feel a lot more worried about how I'd be perceived for talking about BDSM as an orientation. Still, as weird as the concept of "BDSM as an orientation" felt when I first thought of it, it also felt right. When I looked back at my memories and previous actions, it was quite obvious that I have always had these needs, desires and fantasies. Acknowledging this, and applying the word "orientation" to BDSM, helped me come to terms with my BDSM identity.

The "BDSM orientation" idea cleared a mental path for me to think of BDSM as a inbuilt part of myself, like my bone structure or eye color. BDSM became something that it was desirable to accept, come to terms with... even **embrace.** It was a hugely liberating way of thinking about it: **if I thought of BDSM as an orientation, that meant I didn't have to worry about or fight it anymore.**

Since then, I've been so buried in sexuality theory and I've talked to so many BDSM people that -- well, now the idea of a "BDSM orientation" seems kinda boring. I am reminded that it's a radical concept only when I talk to people who don't think about these things all the time. I think that the idea of BDSM as an orientation occurs naturally to people who think a lot about BDSM sexuality, because **so many kinksters** either know we're BDSM people all along, or instantly recognize BDSM once we find it. Here's a quotation from an article about a BDSM-related legal case that quotes sexologist Charles Moser at the end, as he very eloquently describes how BDSM can be considered a sexual orientation:

When I talk to someone who is identifying as BDSM and ask them have you always felt this way, and they almost always report that 'This has been the way I was all along. I didn't realize it. I thought I was interested in more traditional male/female relationships but now I realize that I really like the power and control aspects of relationship.'

... They are very clear often that, 'my relationships which were vanilla were not fulfilling. I always felt like there was something missing. Now that I'm doing BDSM, I am fulfilled. This feels really right to me. This really gets me to my core. It's who I am.'

... And so in the same way as someone who is homosexual, they couldn't really change -- they somehow felt fulfilled in the same-sex relationship -- similarly in a BDSM relationship or scenario, they similarly feel the same factors, and in my mind, that allows me to classify people who fit that as a sexual orientation. I cannot change someone who's into BDSM to not be BDSM.

That's how I feel. Absolutely.

And yet I disagree with Moser on one key point: not all BDSM people are like this. I know that people exist who do BDSM, who don't feel it the same way I do. They don't feel that it's been with them all along. It's not deep-rooted for them. It's not unavoidable, it's not necessary, it doesn't go to their core. They can change from being into BDSM to not doing BDSM, because it's not built-in; it's just something they do sometimes, for fun. There are also plenty of people who have equally strong feelings about their BDSM sexuality, but who have different BDSM preferences from mine. And that's totally okay with me! I will always say that I've got no problem with whatever people want to do, as long as it's kept among consenting adults.

But what does the existence of people like that mean for BDSM as an orientation? Are they somehow less "entitled" to practice BDSM, because it's not as deep-rooted or important to them as it is for, say, me? No, that can't be true. I'm not going to claim that my feelings are "more real" than theirs, or somehow more important, just because BDSM goes straight to my core but not to theirs. They've got as much right as I do to practice these activities, as long as they do it consensually.

So, where does that leave us? It means that BDSM is an orientation for some people, but not for others. I'm fine with that. Does that mean we're done here? Well, no....

... because if BDSM is an orientation for some people but not others, then we're in a bit of a weird place when it comes to societal recognition. In the case I cited above, Charles Moser is claiming that we BDSMers can't change ourselves and that therefore, we don't deserve to be stigmatized for our sexuality.

On the surface, this might seem reasonable, but actually, **whether or not** people can alter their sexual needs, **there's no reason people shouldn't be able to do what they want with other consenting adults**. If any of us phrase the argument as: "I can't change myself, so please don't hate me!" then we are implicitly saying, "If I could change myself, I would... but I can't, so please have pity on me!" In other words, we are implicitly saying: "BDSMers can't 'fix' our sexual needs -- it's not 'our fault' -- so please don't hate us."

And when we say that, we are accepting and validating the way our culture tries to shame our sexuality. We are fundamentally agreeing with the opposition and begging for an exception, rather than trying to change the rule. We are calling BDSM a "fault," rather than stating that freely exercising sexuality is our "right." **When we make BDSM into an orientation, we are often casting BDSM sexuality as something that we would "fix" if we could. But BDSM is not broken in the first place!**

Also, using the orientation argument leaves the entire segment of the population that doesn't feel BDSM as an orientation standing out in the cold. If we go with the orientation model, and say that it's okay for BDSM-identified people to practice BDSM only because we feel it as a deep-rooted orientation... then we are implying that it's **not** okay for people to practice BDSM if they **don't** feel it as a deep-rooted orientation.

Something like this has happened in some gay/lesbian communities: people who have sex with folks of the same gender, but don't identify as strictly gay or lesbian, have sometimes been stigmatized within gay/lesbian communities or even disallowed from gay/lesbian gatherings. I understand that there are historical reasons that kind of thing happened, and analyzing the phenomenon would take up a whole post. I'm pretty sure books have been written about it. But the point is that when it did happen, it left bisexual people -- as well as others who don't fit neatly within the "gay/lesbian orientation" -- out in the cold. And I don't want to support that with BDSM.

So I've tended to avoid that kind of language. I think it is important to move away from "I can't help having these needs," and towards "It's fundamentally unimportant whether we can change our sexual desires; the only really important thing is whether or not we practice them consensually."

But...

there's always a but...

I'll admit that I feel anxiety about abandoning the "orientation model." I still haven't taken the word "orientation" out of my BDSM overview lecture, because it is useful for convincing people that BDSM is okay. Many people, at this point, have accepted the LGBTQ orientation as something that should not be stigmatized. The word "orientation" can really help them understand what BDSM means to us and why it's not okay to stigmatize that, either.

Furthermore, there are obviously people out there (like Charles Moser) who are seeking to protect BDSM legally, as a sexual orientation. They want to make BDSM a protected class, so that we can't get fired or have our kids taken away or suffer other consequences for being into BDSM anymore. If talking about BDSM as a sexual orientation means I can worry less about those potential consequences, then is it worth it? Maybe.

And, of course, I don't want to forget how much the idea of an "orientation" comforted me when I was first coming into BDSM. It made me feel so much better to recognize BDSM as an inbuilt part of myself. I don't want to take that comfort away from anyone else.

So, when I try to campaign for general sexual freedom and acceptance -- "orientation" or no "orientation" -- I imagine that I'll still end up using the word sometimes. But I'll always try to be conscious of it, and I'll always try to speak in ways that support this statement:

It's fundamentally unimportant whether we can change our sexual desires; the only really important thing is whether or not we practice them consensually.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/04/09/classic-repost-bdsm-as-a-sexual-orientation-and-complications-of-the-orientation-model/

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S&M:

[theory] BDSM "versus" Sex

This was originally published in two parts in 2011. I named the first part "Divide and Conquer," and the second part "How Does It Feel?" But as often happens when I split up my long posts, people were already talking about points that I addressed in the second post while commenting on the first post -- before the second post was published. (Unfortunately, my commenters are at least as smart as I am, and they notice when I leave things out.) I've often struggled with length problems as a blogger. If I could write posts that are typical blog length, like 250-500 words, then I'd probably be a lot more successful. But I just can't seem to write short, and since splitting up long posts is a bad idea too, I constantly feel frustrated by blogging... let alone platforms like Twitter! If you have clever thoughts for how I can train myself to be a better short-form writer, email me. Seriously.

* * *

BDSM "versus" Sex

Every once in a while, someone will ask me a question about something BDSM-related that I feel "done with"; I feel like I did all my thinking about those topics, years ago. But it's still useful to get those questions today, because it forces me to try and understand where my head was at, three to seven years ago. It forces me to calibrate my inner processes. I often think of these questions as the "simple" ones, or the "101" questions, because they are so often addressed in typical conversation among BDSMers. Then again, lots of people don't have access to a BDSM community, or aren't interested in their local BDSM community for whatever reason. Therefore, it's useful for me to cover those "simple" questions on my blog anyway.

Plus, just because a question is simple doesn't mean the question is not interesting.

One such question is the "BDSM versus sex" question. Is BDSM always sex? Is it always sexual? A lot of people see BDSM as something that "always" includes sex, or is "always sexual in some way." In the documentary "BDSM: It's Not What You Think!", one famous BDSM writer is quoted saying something like: "I would say that eros is always **involved** in BDSM, even if the participants aren't doing anything that would look sexual to non-BDSMers."

But a lot of other people see BDSM, and the BDSM urge, as something that doesn't necessarily have anything to do with sex -- that is separate from sex.

I see two sides to this question: the political side, and the "how does it feel?" side. Both sides are intertwined; **when it comes to sex, politics can't help shaping our experiences (and vice versa)**. I acknowledge this. **And yet even when I try to account for that, there is still something deeply different about the way my body feels my BDSM urges, as opposed to how my body feels sexual urges.** I don't think that those bodily differences could ever quite go away, no matter how my mental angle on those processes changed.

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The Political Side of BDSM versus Sex

"BDSM versus sex" could be viewed as a facet of that constant and irritating question -- "What is sex, anyway?" I've always found that **the more you look at the line between "what is sex" and "what is not sex," the more blurred the line becomes**.

For example, recall that ridiculous national debate that happened across America when Bill Clinton told us that he hadn't had sex with Monica -- and then admitted to getting a blowjob from her. Is oral sex sex? Maybe oral sex isn't sex! Flutter, flutter, argue, argue.

It is my experience that (cisgendered, heterosexual) women are often more likely to claim that oral sex is not sex, while (cis, het) men are more likely to claim that oral sex is sex. I suspect this is because women face steeper social penalties for having sex (no one wants to be labeled a "slut"), so we are typically more motivated to claim that sex acts "don't count" as sex... whereas men are usually congratulated for having sex (more notches on the bedpost!), so men are typically more motivated to claim that sex acts "count" as sex. (Unless they're Bill Clinton.)

So we already have this weird ongoing debate, about what "qualifies" as sex. And you throw in fetishes such as BDSM, and everyone gets confused all over again. A cultural example of this confusion came up in 2009, when a bunch of professional dominatrixes got arrested in New York City... for being dominatrixes... which everyone previously believed was legal. Flutter, flutter, argue, argue, and it turns out that "prostitution" (which is illegal in New York) is defined as "sexual conduct for money."

But what does "sexual conduct" mean? **At least one previous court had set the precedent that BDSM-for-pay is not the same as "sexual conduct for money"... and yet, in 2009, the Manhattan District Attorney's office decided that "sexual conduct" means "anything that is arousing to the participants"... and then decided that this suddenly meant they ought to go arrest dominatrixes.** It's not clear why the Manhattan

DA did not, then, also begin arresting strippers. And what about random vanilla couples on a standard date-type thing, where the woman makes eyes at the man over dinner, and the man pays for the meal? Sounds like "sexual conduct for money" to me. Which could totally be prostitution, folks, so watch your backs.

In his piece "Is There Such A Thing As Kinky Sex?", Dr. Marty Klein says that:

If practicing kinky sex makes you "other," not one of "us," if it has non-sexual implications, if it means you're defective or dangerous -- who wants that? And so as "kinky sex" and its practitioners are demonized, everyone is concerned -- am I one of "those people"? It makes people fear their fantasies or curiosity, which then acquire too much power. It leads to secrecy between partners, as people withhold information about their preferences or experiences.

... I'd like to destroy the idea of binary contrast -- that kinky and non-kinky sex are clearly different. Instead, I suggest that kinky and vanilla sex are parts of a continuum, the wide range of human eroticism. We all slide side to side along that continuum during our lives, sometimes in a single week. We don't need to fear our fantasies, curiosity, or (consensual) sexual preferences. They don't make us bad or different, just human. Some people like being emotional outlaws. They'll always find a way to get the frisson of otherness. But most people don't want to live that way. So ending kink's status as dangerous and wrong, and its practitioners as "other," is the most liberating thing we can do -- for everyone.

That's certainly reasonable from a political standpoint. I've made similar arguments. (Some folks, such as the brilliant male submissive writer maymay, also argue against the common idea that "kink" is limited to "BDSM"; they prefer an expansive definition of "kink" that denotes a vaster cornucopia of sexuality.)

Plus, **I even suspect that a lot of the distinctions made by BDSMers ourselves are based far more on stigma than sense**. For example, when I was younger, I went through a period where I couldn't stand to have the word "submissive" applied to myself. I insisted that I was into BDSM solely for the physical sensation, and swore I would never ever do something solely submission-oriented (such as wearing a collar). It was like I could only handle BDSM as long as I distanced myself from the power elements; the power elements carried too much stigma in my head for me to acknowledge them... yet.

I also used to carefully separate "BDSM" from "sex" in my head. Part of me felt like, "If my desire for pain and power is sexual, then it's weird. If it's not sexual, then it's less weird." (It looks strange when I type it, now, but I guess that's how sexual stigma works: it rarely holds up against the clear light of day.) It took me a while to integrate sexuality into my BDSM practice. In contrast, I once met a couple who told me that it took them a long time to do BDSM that **wasn't** part of sex. In **their** heads, the thought was more like: "If the desire for pain and power is sexual, then it's not weird. But if it's not sexual, then it's really weird."

I've heard of plenty of dungeons where sex is not allowed -- sometimes for legal reasons, but sometimes because there is actually a social standard against it: people are like, "Dude, let's not get our nice pure BDSM all dirty by including sex." (Note: My

experience is primarily with dungeons owned by "lifestyle" BDSMers -- "lifestyle" being a clumsy word that attempts to denote those of us who are motivated to do BDSM for reasons other than money. While there is some overlap between "lifestyle" BDSM and professional BDSM, the overlap can be surprisingly rare, and professional BDSM is often banned at lifestyle BDSM parties. Lifestyle dungeons are often non-profit organizations, and often function more like community centers than moneymaking venues. I understand that some professional dungeons have a "no sex" rule out of a desire to protect the boundaries of dominatrixes who work there, who may not wish to be asked to engage in sex.)

There are also plenty of cultural groups who do things that look suspiciously like BDSM... who insist that they have nothing to do with BDSM. For example, I've heard of spanking clubs whose members get really mad if you dare bring BDSM up in their presence.

And then there's groups like Taken In Hand, a quasi-conservative organization. Actual testimonial from the Taken In Hand site:

There are lots of websites for people in the BDSM, D/s, DD (domestic discipline) and spanking communities. There are websites for people who belong to religions that advocate male-head-of-household marriage. There are even websites for Christians who are interested in BDSM. But there are very few websites for people who are interested in male-led intimate relationships but who are not interested in all that the above communities associate with this kind of relationship (jargon, clothes, etc.) Some of us don't even like thinking of this as a lifestyle.

Well, my friend, you know what... you can refuse to call yourself BDSM all you want, and you can reject our "jargon" all you want, and you can "dislike" thinking of this "lifestyle" until the end of time... and you have every right to insist that we have nothing to do with you. But when your site has posts that include comments like "When my husband behaves in a dominant manner I basically swoon," or have titles like "Don't forget your whip," well... I'm just saying.

Also, since you mention rejecting BDSM "clothes"? I'll just say that I can be an astoundingly badass domme in a t-shirt. And I have done so. Multiple times.

Personally, I am particularly frustrated by the stigmatizing idea that BDSM has nothing to do with love. Sometimes I encounter this idea that BDSM has to be separated from sex because BDSM has nothing to do with sex, whereas sex supposedly "should" be about love. The truth is that both BDSM and sex are very different for different people, emotions-wise. Although many people experiment with "casual BDSM," the same way many people experiment with "casual sex," a stereotype that BDSMers **cannot** find love in the act is wrong and absurd.

So yeah. Nowadays, many of these "BDSM versus sex" reactions strike me as being born out of pure, irrational stigma. As Dr. Klein noted, these reactions are usually born of the terrible human urge to exclude: to find ways to differentiate ourselves from "those people." Humans apparently love to think things like: "I'm not like **those people**. It doesn't matter if I, for example, write extensive rape fantasy fiction! That couldn't

possibly be BDSM! Because I'm not a BDSMer! Because BDSM is dirty."

But we shouldn't necessarily blame people for this instinct to reject and categorize: the instinct is one that comes from being scared and oppressed... because the social penalties for "getting it wrong" are high. Remember, those New York City dominatrixes thought they were "safe" from the law as long as BDSM didn't count as sex. But as soon as someone decided BDSM "counted as" sex, those dominatrixes were arrested.

It's just one more example of how sexual stigma for "different kinds of sex" is constantly intertwined. No type of consensual sexuality can express itself freely until people agree that "among consenting adults, there is no 'should'." The Romans, those ancient imperialists, used to say: "Divide and conquer." When consensual sexualities are scared of each other, we will continue to be conquered. **As long as "vanilla" people are afraid of "BDSM"... as long as "BDSMers" are afraid of being seen as "sexual"... as long as the social penalties for being a "slut" or a "whore" are incredibly steep... as long as sex workers are stigmatized and criminalized... everyone will be bound by these oppressive standards.**

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The Embodied Side of BDSM versus Sex

Although Part 1 was all about how the divide between "BDSM" and "sex" is often nonsensical, or purely political, or socially constructed... **that doesn't mean that the divide does not exist**. I once had a conversation about ignoring social constructs with a wise friend, who noted dryly that: "One-way streets are a social construct. That doesn't mean we should ignore them." Just because the outside world influences our sexuality, does not mean that our sexual preferences are invalid.

Some polyamorous BDSMers have very different rules about having sex with outsiders, as opposed to doing BDSM with outsiders. For example, during the time when I was considering a transition to polyamory, I myself had a couple relationships where we were sexually monogamous -- yet my partners agreed that I could do BDSM with people who weren't my partner. **Those particular partners felt jealous and threatened by the idea of me having sex with another man, but they didn't mind if I did BDSM with another man.** Maybe the feelings of those partners only arose because they categorized "BDSM" and "sex" into weirdly different socially-constructed ways... **but those partners' feelings were nonetheless real, and their feelings deserved respect.**

And there are also unmistakable ways that BDSM **feels** different from sex. There is something, bodily, that is **just plain different** about BDSM, as opposed to sex. I often find myself thinking of "BDSM feelings" and "sexual feelings" as flowing down two parallel channels in my head... sometimes these channels intersect, but sometimes they're far apart. The BDSM urge strikes me as deeply different, separate, from the sex urge. It can be fun to combine BDSM and sex, but there are definitely times when I want BDSM that feel very unlike most times when I want sex.

The biggest political reason why it's difficult to discuss this is the way in which we currently conceptualize sexuality through "orientations": we have built a cultural "orientation model" focused on the idea that "acceptable" sexuality is "built-in," or

"innate." Some BDSMers consider BDSM an "orientation" -- and I, myself, once found that thinking of BDSM as an orientation was extremely helpful in coming to terms with my BDSM desires. But one thing I don't like about the orientation model now is that it makes us sound like we're apologizing. "Poor little me! It's not my fault I'm straight! Or a domme! Whatever!" Why would any of these things be faults in the first place? Our bodies are our own, our experiences are our own, and our consent is our own to give.

The orientation model is one of the cultural factors that makes it hard to discuss sensory, sensual experiences without defaulting to sexuality. As commenter saurus pointed out on the *Feministe* version of part 1 of this post:

Sometimes I think that we have compulsions, needs or "fetishes" that aren't sexual, but lumping them in with sexuality is sometimes the most convenient or socially manageable way to deal with them or get those needs met. They might even physically arouse us for a variety of reasons, but that might be a side effect instead of the act's inherent nature. Which is not to say that every act can be cleanly cleaved into "sexual" and "non-sexual" -- of course not. But I think we lack a language around these needs that doesn't use sexuality. I see a lot of groundbreaking work coming out of the asexual and disability justice communities in this regard (which is just to say that I find the folks in these groups are churning out some incredible ways to "queer" conventional dominant ideas about sexuality; not that they never have sex or whatever).

I think one answer to that is to just open up the definition of sexuality to include these things, but as someone who identifies vehemently not as "sex positive" but as "sex non-judgmental," I know I don't personally want all my shit to be lumped in with sexuality. It just makes me picture some sex judgmental person insisting that "oh, that's ***totally*** *sexual."*

I, Clarisse, can certainly attest that it's common for people to have BDSM encounters that are "just" BDSM -- "no sex involved." For example -- an encounter where one partner whips the other, or gets whipped, and there's no genital contact or even discussion of genitals. And I'd like to stress that when I have encounters like that, they can be very satisfying without involving sex. The release -- the high -- I get from a heavy BDSM encounter can be its own reward.

I've also had BDSM encounters where I got turned on...

... but I didn't feel turned on until later, or afterwards, or until my partner did something specific to draw out my desire. For example -- I remember that in one intense BDSM encounter as a domme, I wound up the encounter and pulled away from my partner. We had both been sitting down; I stood up and took off the metal claws I'd been using to rip him up. (Secretly, the claws were banjo picks. Do-It-Yourself BDSM is awesome.)

Then I leaned over my partner to pick something up. I had thought we were pretty much done, but he seized me as I leaned over, and he pulled me close and kissed my neck, and I literally gasped in shock. My sexual desire spiked so hard... I practically melted into his arms. And yet if you'd asked me, moments before, whether I was turned on... I would have said "no."

One way to think about it might be that sometimes, BDSM "primes" me so that I'm

more receptive to sexual energy. It's not that BDSM is exactly a sexual turn-on in itself; sometimes it is, but that's actually surprisingly rare. Yet BDSM often... gets my blood flowing?... and seems to "open the floodgates," so sexual hormones can storm through my body.

And just in case this wasn't complex enough for you... on the other hand, I've had BDSM encounters where my partner tried to take it sexual, and I wasn't interested. It's almost like there's a BDSM cycle that I often get into, and once the cycle is sufficiently advanced, I can't easily shift out of it.

Sometimes, when I'm near the "peak" of the BDSM cycle, then being interrupted for any reason -- sex, or anything else -- is absolutely horrible. I'd rather be left on the edge of orgasm, burning with sexual desire, than be hurt until I **almost** cry. The emotion becomes a stubborn lump in my throat; becomes balled up in my chest. At times like that, it almost feels hard to breathe.

A while back, a reporter named Mac McClelland who worked in Haiti made a splash by writing an article about how she used "violent sex" to ease her Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. I briefly reported on the article for *Feministe,* but at the time, I didn't share many of my thoughts about what she wrote. One thing I did say was that the reporter didn't use any BDSM terminology -- at least not that I spotted. She didn't seem to conceptualize her desire for "violent sex" as a BDSM thing at all. Interestingly, a *Feministe* commenter named Jadey, who has experience with kink, also didn't conceptualize the reporter's article that way. Jadey wrote:

I don't think she's bad or wrong, and I don't think her method of coping with her PTSD is bad or wrong.... [Yet] I've got a kink/BDSM background, but that's not what she's describing here. She's talking about something far different, and I can't understand the experience she describes with Isaac. It is... incomprehensible.

I want to stress here that I, Clarisse Thorn, have never been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. (And I've undergone plenty of analysis, so I'm sure that if I had PTSD, someone would have noticed by now.) And just in case it needs to be said again, I'll also stress that I have no intention of telling anyone else how to define their own experiences. And just in case it needs to be said again, there is a big difference between consenting BDSM and abuse.

But unlike Jadey, when I read the original "violent sex" article, the reporter's description of her encounter sounded a lot like some of my preferences... indeed, it sounded like some of the BDSM encounters I've had. For example, the reporter writes:

"Okay," my partner said. "I love you, okay?" I said, I know, okay. And with that he was on me, forcing my arms to my sides, then pinning them over my head, sliding a hand up under my shirt when I couldn't stop him. The control I'd lost made my torso scream with anxiety; I cried out desperately as I kicked myself free.... When I got out from under him and started to scramble away, he simply caught me by a leg or an upper arm or my hair and dragged me back. By the time he pinned me by my neck with one forearm so I was forced to use both hands to free up space between his elbow and my windpipe, I'd largely exhausted myself.

And just like that, I'd lost. It's what I was looking for, of course. But my body -- my hard-fighting, adrenaline-drenched body -- reacted by exploding into terrible panic.... I did not enjoy it in the way a person getting screwed normally would. But as it became clear that I could endure it, I started to take deeper breaths. And my mind stayed there, stayed present even when it became painful.... My body felt devastated but relieved; I'd lost, but survived. After he climbed off me, he gathered me up in his arms. I broke into a thousand pieces on his chest, sobbing so hard that my ribs felt like they were coming loose.

... Isaac pulled my hair away from my wet face, repeating over and over and over something that he probably believed but that I had to relearn. "You are so strong," he said. "You are so strong. You are so strong."

Sounds extremely familiar to me.

Now, it's not like I have BDSM encounters like that all the time; indeed, experiences of that type are relatively rare for me. But the reporter's description doesn't sound "far different" from what I've experienced. Certainly not "incomprehensible." There's only one big difference, actually: I've never had such an intense BDSM experience in which my partner also had penis-in-vagina sex with me. (I'm assuming the reporter means "penis-in-vagina" sex when she talks about "getting screwed", but I could be wrong.)

Honestly, I'm not sure why I would **want** to combine vaginal sex with an experience like that. Vaginal sex strikes me, personally, as kinda incidental to what I'd get out of it. But maybe I'll try it sometime and it'll be the greatest thing in the world; we'll see, I guess.

Sometimes I find that I've still got a "BDSM versus sex" distinction to work out, although I seem to have comfortably settled into the frameworks I've created. One of my very first blog entries, back in 2008, was called "Casual Sex? Casual Kink?", and I spent the whole thing musing about whether I was more or less okay with casual BDSM than I was with casual sex.

These days, I find that I'm kinda okay with both casual sex and casual BDSM, but I much prefer those experiences within intimate relationships. Make no mistake, my friends: BDSM can include a great deal of love and connection... at least as much as sex.

To hammer the point home, let me tell you about what happened after I broke up with a much-beloved ex-boyfriend: Mr. Inferno. It was back when I was very focused on being monogamous with my partners. Mr. Inferno broke up with me, and a month or two later I had the chance to have an overnight BDSM encounter with another man, so I took it. There was no genital contact; the whole encounter was limited to this guy giving me orders, and hurting me until I cried.

But I remember, even as I slipped into the familiar emotional cycle, that I couldn't let go: I couldn't let go because I felt like I was betraying Mr. Inferno. He'd broken my heart, but on some level I felt like I still belonged to him. It was wrong, wrong, wrong for me to cry in someone else's arms. The **wrongness** rang through me like a bell. It was so impossible, unbearable -- all I could think was how it should have been Mr. Inferno. I choked on the tears. I couldn't lose myself in them.

Later, I mentioned to my partner that one of my ex-boyfriends (not Mr. Inferno) had

trouble dealing with my BDSM desires. "Ah," my partner said. "That explains why you had trouble letting yourself cry." I decided to nod; to let him think he knew what was blocking me off. It seemed simpler.

In the morning, I had breakfast with my partner. We hugged and split up, and I went for a walk until I found a local creek. I sat next to the creek and I closed my eyes and I let the helpless tears slip down my cheeks.

I'd felt (and I'd known others who felt) this way after the dissolution of a sexual relationship. But I had never imagined that such a reaction of intense bodily loyalty could apply to BDSM as well as sex. I hadn't anticipated that I'd feel such heartbreaking, visceral loss just because I let another man hurt me.

So different, and yet so the same.

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This can be found on the Internet in two parts:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/10/09/bdsm-versus-sex-part-1-political-concerns/

and

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/10/14/bdsm-versus-sex-part-2-how-does-it-feel/

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S&M:

[theory] BDSM Roles, "Topping From The Bottom," and "Service Top"

I wrote this post in 2011.

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BDSM Roles, "Topping From The Bottom," and "Service Top"

I often say that all **consensual** sexuality is okay. Open relationships? S&M? Same-sex partnerships? One-night stands? Porn? I could care less how people have sex, as long as the people involved are consenting adults. This means that most of the interesting and important questions are about consent: how do we make sure that we always have consensual sex? How do we ensure that we're always respecting our own boundaries and our partners' boundaries? How do we talk about our preferences and our consent? I write a lot about sexual communication for this reason.

Every once in a while, though, there's something interesting to discuss besides consent. (Totally weird, I know!) One of those interesting things is stereotypes. Also interesting: bad dynamics in the BDSM community.

One example of a bad, weird dynamic is the "one true way" thing. Some people act like there are "right" ways and "wrong" ways to do consensual BDSM -- as if some consensual BDSM is more legit than other consensual BDSM. Often, people do this via what we call "role policing": they make claims about "real submission" and "real dominance." (Even worse, people will sometimes act like dominant people are socially "better" or "more important" than submissive people. Or they'll act like men are "inherently" dominant, or women are "inherently" submissive. It's a clusterfuck! Thomas MacAulay Millar has a great essay about this called "Domism.")

Examples of role policing might include:

* "If you were really submissive, then you would be serving my dinner right now instead of having me serve myself."

* "If you were really dominant, then you would pay for my drinks."

* "If you were really submissive, then you wouldn't be confident enough to write a blog about your sex life." (Not that I'm biased or anything.)

Sometimes these are hilarious light-hearted jokes. But sometimes they're not. Sometimes they're bullshit, and they make people feel as though they're "bad at submission" or "bad at dominance." Also, it gets really silly when we start thinking about switches -- people who can feel comfortable in the dominant role or the submissive role, such as myself.

One very common, relevant assumption is that dominant people always enjoy inflicting pain: that sadists and dominants are always the same group. They're not! Sometimes people are into sadism, or into dominance, or maybe they're into a lot of sadism but a little dominance, or whatever. The same thing goes for submission: sometimes people are submissive and like taking pain, but sometimes people are submissive without being masochistic, or maybe they're into a little bit of submission and a lot of masochism, or whatever.

Or maybe they're masochists who like ordering their partners to hurt them. I once threw a memorable party at which my then-boyfriend, a mostly-submissive gentleman, arranged for a bunch of our friends to grab me and hold me down while he ate cake off my body. As he did this, I clearly recall shouting at him: "You better hurt me, or I'm going to safeword on your ass." So he hurt me! It was great.

Because "submissive" and "masochist" aren't always the same thing -- and "dominant" and "sadist" aren't always the same thing -- the BDSM community uses the terms "bottom" and "top." A "bottom" is a blanket term for a submissive and/or a masochist -- the receiving partner. A "top" is a blanket term for a dominant and/or a sadist -- the partner who is providing sensation. The point is to have words that indicate who is giving and who is receiving, without making claims about each partner's preferences. (These words can also be used as verbs. For example, if I am "topping," then I am in the dominant and/or sadistic position.)

And yet! **Even though we have these handy terms "top" and "bottom," which are specifically designed to help us avoid making assumptions, people end up making assumptions.** There are two common BDSM community phrases that are often deployed

in tones of disgust and irritation. One of those phrases is "topping from the bottom." The other phrase is "service top."

"Topping from the bottom" indicates a person who exercises power in the relationship, despite being in the "bottom" position. There's nothing wrong with doing that, as long as both partners consent. But some people talk about "topping from the bottom" like it's bad -- as if power ought to belong to one side or the other; as if the bottom should never express preferences or make decisions about what's going on. Which is ridiculous.

I'll grant that it can be annoying if I'm trying to be a top, and my partner isn't listening or isn't doing what I want. But in those cases, it's important to pay attention to what is actually going on. Is my partner resisting because he actually doesn't want to do what we're doing? In that case, I should respect his preferences. Or maybe my partner is resisting because he wants me to punish him. Or maybe we just have bad chemistry! Whatever. The point is, "topping from the bottom" isn't inherently a bad thing. "Topping from the bottom" doesn't make the bottom into a "bad submissive" or whatever. It just means that either the person is trying to communicate, or the person is looking for a certain kind of push-pull dynamic.

Simultaneously, there's the phrase "service top." It's basically the same thing in reverse. A "service top" is a top who enjoys topping in line with his partner's desires. And once again, some people act like this is a bad thing -- as if service tops "aren't dominant enough." But it's not inherently a bad thing! If a service top is doing things just because her partner likes them... then good for her!

I sometimes use phrases like "topping from the bottom" and "service top" to describe dynamics of a relationship: to talk about what is actually going on. But that's because I don't think there's anything wrong with topping from the bottom or being a service top. I try to avoid joking around about it unless I know that the person I'm talking to is not sensitive about the topic. And I really don't like it when people use those phrases while role policing.

BDSM can carry an incredible emotional charge, and a lot of the time, people will want comfort and snuggles after doing BDSM together. Sometimes, part of that comfort and snuggles includes reassuring the partner: "I know you just beat the shit out of me until I cried; I enjoyed it -- I still like you and think you're a good person." Or, "I know you called your safeword while I was hurting you; I still think you're a beautiful submissive and you did a great job -- in fact I love it when you call your safeword because it helps me understand you better." I think that in these cases it's totally okay to say something like, "You're such a good submissive." But it's so important to keep in mind that there isn't some kind of submission that's inherently "better" than any other kind -- or dominance that's "better" -- or sadism, masochism, whatever.

And here is the part of the entry where I pull aside the mask and reveal that even though I claimed I wouldn't talk about consent... I was secretly talking about consent all along!

The consent problem here is that **role policing can be used to mess with people's consent**, because role policing can be used to pressure people. If a person wants to feel like a "real submissive," and you tell them that "real submissives" always receive anal

sex... then the person might accept anal sex even if he doesn't really want to... because he wants to be a "real submissive."

I have personally witnessed accusations of "topping from the bottom" or "service top" being used to hurt people who were just trying to communicate, or arrange a relationship that they liked. For example: "I thought you were a submissive. Why are you asking me to tie you up? Stop topping from the bottom! I'm the dominant partner, I make the decisions!"

An important facet of consent is trying to create a pressure-free environment, so that all partners feel comfortable talking about what they want. Sometimes, it can be very hard to create that environment, because pressure isn't always easy to see or understand -- but if we want maximum consent power, then we have to do our best. One way to create a pressure-free environment is to be careful about phrases like "topping from the bottom" and "service top" and the role policing that can go along with those phrases.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/11/12/bdsm-roles-topping-from-the-bottom-and-service-top/

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FEMINISM:

[theory] "Inherent Female Submission": The Wrong Question

I wrote this post in mid-2011. Perhaps you can tell that I was in the depths of my obsession with pickup artists at the time... those guys talk about "inherent female submission" ad nauseam. Not all pickup artists are evil and misogynist, but the ones who are love to beat this horse.

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"Inherent Female Submission": The Wrong Question

I get a certain question occasionally, from straight dudes who've had a number of sexual partners. It goes something like this:

All the women I've slept with liked pain. They asked me to hurt them or to dominate them in bed. I did it, and enjoyed it; I loved how much it turned them on... it turned them on a lot. But I keep thinking about it now. Why are all women into being submissive and/or masochistic in bed? What does that ***mean****?*

They ask me this question in vaguely worried tones. Sometimes they say things like, "It's really creepy." It is obvious that these dudes are rather concerned about this Terrible Truth.

Here's my short answer for those guys: If you know women who are submissive and/or masochistic in bed, that means those particular women like being submissive and/or masochistic in bed. It doesn't mean anything else.

You're still here? Ah, well. I figured that wouldn't satisfy. So here's a longer answer:

Firstly, if you're a straight dude, and you're drawing conclusions about "all women" based on the women you get involved with, then stop. Just stop. Even if you have slept with zillions of women, you don't actually know what all women want, because:

A) **Your experience of women is limited to women who got involved with you.** You are screening for certain qualities, sometimes consciously, and sometimes unconsciously or by accident. If you tend to enjoy the dominant role, for example, or if you use a dominant style of flirtation, then you could be screening for submissive female partners, whether you intend to or not.

B) **Everyone has biases, including you.** I love the old saying: "When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." If you have a bias towards seeing women as sexually submissive (and you almost certainly do, because female sexual submission is a hugely prevalent cultural trope), then you're more likely to see female submission in places where it does not exist.

C) **Women, like people of all genders, are demonstrably varied.** You really don't think non-submissive straight women exist? Why then, it must be so inconvenient when I point you to the work of blatantly dominant women, huh? It's shocking, I know... next I'll be telling you that queer and asexual women exist! (Not to mention women who switch among roles -- from submissive to dominant, from sadistic to masochistic. I primarily go for submissive masochism, but still, I myself play for both teams.)

The thing is, though... no matter how many holes I can poke in these dudes' anecdotal "data," I can't bring myself to worry like they do. Even if a brilliant, well-reviewed study came out tomorrow and proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that 100% of women are submissive masochists in bed, I wouldn't care. (I bet you my left ear this study will never happen, but I'm just saying, even if it did, I wouldn't care.)

Let me say it really clearly: **Even if most women are submissive masochists in bed (and I'm not convinced most women are), there's nothing wrong with that. I don't care.**

Why don't I care? Because all this anxiety and argument about submission -- and in particular, what it means for women to be submissive; whether all women are submissive; whether women are "inherently" or "biologically" submissive; whether BDSM is an orientation or not... this is all the wrong question.

I'll note that the research seems to indicate that more kinky women are submissive than dominant. Of course, this doesn't necessarily indicate anything about the tastes of women who don't identify as kinky. And it's probably biased by culture, in that everything from fashion photos to romance novels emphasizes female submission and male dominance. Within BDSM culture, female dominance and male submission are often disappeared, much to the justified frustration of actual female dominants and male submissives. When

all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail -- sometimes including our own psyches and sexualities.

Plus, if the only available patterns for kink emphasize something a person doesn't like, then that person will probably avoid kink. Note that in the research I linked to, for example, the percentage of submissive women was higher in samples from within the BDSM subculture than in samples from outside the BDSM subculture... perhaps because many BDSM subcultural gatherings emphasize female submission and thereby alienate women who are primarily dominant. Anyway, regardless... this is **still** the wrong question.

In short, "inherent female submission" is the wrong question.

Certainly, I've fought through a lot of personal fears about what my interest in BDSM meant for me as a feminist... but these days I have trouble understanding what, exactly, got me so upset. I can't believe how long it took me to outthink those fears. Now, it just seems instinctively obvious to me that:

1) **The only reason these conversations happen at all is that BDSM, and especially submission, is seen as broken and problematic and screwed-up and a sign of weakness.** What if we viewed S&M proclivities as a superpower rather than a perversion? What if submission and masochism, in particular, were viewed as signs of strength and endurance and emotional complexity, rather than weakness?

2) **Sexual kinks don't necessarily affect one's performance in non-sexual fields.** A sexually submissive woman won't make a bad CEO (at least, not because she's sexually submissive). I mean, come on, it's not like there aren't sexually submissive men in powerful corporate positions. When I was younger I remember being scared that, in some bizarre way, I was betraying women's liberation by being sexually submissive; this seems ridiculous to me now. That fear can only survive in a culture where people are looking for excuses -- no matter how flimsy -- to control and disempower women. Because it doesn't make any damn sense on its own.

3) **Rape is still rape. Everyone still has a right to consent, including submissives.** A submissive partner (of any gender) must be able to withdraw consent, and a dominant partner (of any gender) must make space for them to withdraw consent. It's always great when both partners can have an honest conversation about desire, trying to avoid pressure and unfair expectations (whether those expectations arise from sexist culture or from whatever else). Safewords are one frequently-recommended communication tactic for those who have rape fantasies, although they aren't the only tactic. What really burns me about many discussions of "inherent female submission" is that they have horrible overtones of blaming the victim and justifying rape... much like "she was wearing a short skirt, so she was asking for it." In reality, "inherent female submission" says absolutely nothing about women's right to choose our partners and protect our bodily integrity. Female submissives have made it perfectly clear that we do, in fact, claim that right.

I think most of the dudes who ask this question come to me, a feminist, and they ask this question in hushed and worried tones, because they are decent guys and they are concerned about The Consequences Of This Terrible Truth. I'd venture a guess that

they've met other dudes who talk nonstop about how women are *vain and stupid and hysterical and, snicker snicker, why do we let those dumb bitches even vote and, oh by the way, did you know that lots of girls like to be choked and isn't that sooo significant...?* And so these decent guys who are talking to me -- they have learned to associate discussions of female sexual submission with anti-feminism, and with attempts to disempower women in other spheres.

Being decent guys, this worries them, because they know that people of all genders deserve equal opportunity. But it is all a red herring! It's a series of illusions thrown up by BDSM stigma; by the idea that sexual kinks always mean something about the rest of a person's life; by people who don't comprehend that everyone has the right to consent; and by blatant, uncomplicated misogyny! Female sexual submission isn't even close to a threat to women's liberation, unless we allow it to be. If we weren't constantly forced to deal with the broken assumptions of a broken misogynist culture, this question would never occur to anyone!

It doesn't matter nearly as much what the cultural patterns are around sexual submission, as it does how we deal with sexual submission. If your partner is submissive, you can respect their desires and also respect them as a person. As I already noted, in BDSM this means communicating carefully, like with safewords and/or other tactics. Some people can have great sexual communication that's totally non-verbal -- but I always encourage explicit verbal communication because for many people, it's easier to make intentions and desires clear that way, and tactics like safewords provide a fallback in case there's a mistake.

So: what does "inherent female submission" mean for women, for feminism, for equal rights, for women who work, for powerful women? For housewives? For disabled women? For female rape survivors? For rape survivors of other genders?

Say it with me now: It's the wrong question. The mere act of asking this question implies a cultural context that is seeking excuses to disempower women. **Female sexual submission means nothing**...

... **except what every woman wants it to mean, for herself.**

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/07/01/inherent-female-submission-the-wrong-question/

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MANLINESS:

[theory] *Fifty Shades of Grey, Fight Club,* and the Complications of Male Dominance

I wrote this in early 2012, when everyone and their brother was talking about the amazingly successful fanfiction-turned-BDSM-smut Fifty Shades of Grey *trilogy, by E.L. James. (The online version of this post contains a bunch of relevant current links at the end.) It's one of my rare attempts at pegging an article to a recent news item; I had been planning to write this article for months, but* Fifty Shades *gave me an opportunity to actually do it. My main goal as a sex writer has always been to put forth analysis that's responsive to the conversations I hear a lot, yet independent of the latest craze. For one thing, I almost never care to track what Everyone Is Talking About Right This Minute!!, and I'm irritated to think that I ought to do so. But I've come to reluctantly understand that responding to current news is one of the best ways to get more eyeballs on my work, so I'm trying to do more of that. I've also been encouraged in that direction by employers -- most notably the gender-lens website RoleReboot.org, where I took on the role of Sex + Relationships Section Editor in late 2011. A slightly shorter version of this article was originally published there.*

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Fifty Shades of Grey, Fight Club, **and the Complications of Male Dominance**

Much is being made of the highly successful S&M erotica novel *Fifty Shades of Grey.* People are blaming feminism for making women into submissives, blaming feminism for preventing women from being submissives, blaming women for having sexual desires at all, and a whole lot of other boring and typical stuff that comes up in any conversation about women and S&M. News flash: it's not the feminist revolution that is "causing" women to have fantasies of submission. S&M fantasies have been around since the beginning of time. (And the 1950s S&M-sensation book, *The Story of O,* was much better written than *Fifty Shades of Grey.)*

As an S&M writer, I hear a lot of allegations about how "all" (or "almost all") women are sexually submissive and how this must Mean Something. This is echoed in the coverage of *Fifty Shades of Grey,* in which everyone is demanding to know What It All Means About Women. I've already taken on these questions as they apply to women. But there's another submerged question here -- about men. There's plenty of talk and stereotypes about how men are inherently violent, or more aggressive than women, or "the dominant sex."

As I said in my previous article: I think it's quite questionable whether women are "inherently submissive," but my conclusion is that I don't care. It doesn't actually matter to me whether women in general are "inherently submissive" (though I really don't think women are), or whether submissive women's preferences are philosophically Deep And Meaningful (though I'm not convinced they are). What matters is:

1. How women (or any other people) can explore sexually submissive preferences consensually,

2. How women (or any other people) can compartmentalize submissive preferences so that their whole lives are safe and fulfilling and happy, and

3. How women (or any other people) can be treated well in arenas that aren't even relevant to their sexuality -- like the workplace.

This is also how I feel about these ideas of "inherent male violence." I don't buy that men are "the dominant sex" or that men are "inherently violent." Based on what I've read, it seems quite clear that individuals with higher testosterone levels -- who are, incidentally, not always men -- often experience more aggressive feelings. Yet that's a far cry from large-scale generalizations, and it's also frequently irrelevant to questions about how people can best deal with those aggressive feelings. Plus, psychological submission can be a very separate thing from physical aggression levels.

Much of the time, when it comes to aggression, anger management is the answer, the same way a naturally shy or submissive person needs to learn to set boundaries. But there are circumstances where catharsis is completely acceptable. Lots of perfectly decent men have urges towards violent dominance; what do they do about it? How much do they agonize, like Christian Grey in *Fifty Shades of Grey,* and how much do they explore their desires in a consensual and reasonable way?

I always thought that the late-90s movie *Fight Club* was fascinating primarily because of its lens on masculinity and violence. It's not just about the violence men to do each other, but to themselves. Quotes include "You have to give up; you have to know that someday you're gonna die," and "The first rule of Fight Club is: you do not talk about Fight Club." I first watched it before I knew much about S&M, but now whenever I think about it, I think about how the idea of a fight club -- where people would get together and fight, for catharsis and community -- is so very reminiscent of how a lot of people experience S&M. *Fight Club* even has safewords. Someone says stop, you stop. I obviously don't support the endpoint of the *Fight Club* story (i.e., blowing up buildings), but the idea of establishing a men's community via a fight club seems reasonable to me.

So, what are the practicalities of dealing with aggressive or dominant tendencies in the sexual arena? As an S&M person, I've experimented with dominance as well as submission, but because violence is so associated with masculinity, I turned to some egalitarian male S&Mers for advice. I believe that even for non-S&M people, their perspectives make a really good lens for ideas of gender and violence and power. Of course, the first thing one of my friends told me was: "I'm not sure I really see dominance in general as being particularly masculine. I don't really think it's a gender associated thing."

That gentleman, who comments around the Internet under the name Scootah, went on to add: "I've certainly worried about my kinks in the past. I mean fundamentally, I get really, really turned on by grabbing someone by the hair, throwing them into the wall, backhanding them, etc. That's a pretty disturbing thought for an egalitarian who's worked with abuse victims. I spend a lot of time considering the ethics of my kinks; my partners' enthusiastic consent is a major priority."

Jay Wiseman, author of the famous S&M primer *SM101,* talks about his own early fears towards the beginning of that book. He writes about how he began having sadistic fantasies, and went to the public library to research them. All he could find was portraits of serial killers, which scared the hell out of him. He writes:

I decided to keep myself under surveillance. I made up my mind that I was not going to hurt anybody. If I thought I was turning into someone that would harm somebody else,

then I would either put myself in a mental institution or commit suicide. And thus I lived, waiting and watching to see if I was turning into someone that I needed to shoot.

Fortunately, Wiseman found partners who were open to exploring S&M with him, and went on to write extensively about safety and consent and communication within S&M. Trying to communicate in an egalitarian way is arguably the most complicated part of any S&M encounter; as Scootah told me, "There are certainly elements that could potentially unbalance a relationship in my favor. I'm a big reasonably strong guy. I do usually make more money than my partners. I also have this whole sense of position in the local S&M community. I mostly just try to be aware of those things. I try to be very careful about not taking advantage of that and negotiate clearly and not pressure people."

There are lots of ways to do clear negotiation, including asking open-ended questions before any S&M actually happens: "What are you interested in? Could you go into that more?" There's also a huge emphasis on talking through the S&M encounter afterwards, as part of the post-S&M processing we call aftercare. As another gent who goes by Noir said: "It really helped me to have a few great, feminist S&M partners. Having that echo of 'it's OK, I want this,' as well as the honest feedback when I do wrong really helped shape how I experience S&M, and with who. It's meant I learned how better to read and grasp the people in my, er, grasp."

Noir also noted, "I strive to use dominance and submission as a tool for helping my partners become stronger, in ways that also feed my S&M preferences. For example, I tend to form long-term interests with women who want a 'safe space' to extend and explore their ability to be sluts, with all that can imply. But in the process, we also explore how becoming more confident in one's sexuality also can reflect into everyday life. Also, just coming to spaces in the S&M community can be a goldmine of information. All a dominant man has to do is read, listen, open up and understand. One thing I learned was that my fears about reinforcing our messed-up society were shared by women into kink... but also that my ways of approaching the topic, as 'oh, we're so controlled by society!' were themselves pushing too much agency out of women's choices. There's a balance there that we guys who identify as both feminist and kinky have to respect, and that can come from listening to feminist women struggle with these issues, themselves."

The alternative sexuality advocate Pepper Mint (who has his own blog) told me that in terms of putting gender on his experiences, "I am a bit genderqueer, and I personally experience dominance with either a feminine or masculine vibe from moment to moment. Certain activities -- like punching -- feel masculine, while others -- like whipping -- feminine in the moment. Also, I switch, meaning that I don't always take the dominant role. Strangely, my most clearly masculine S&M activity is masochism. I always feel very manly while taking pain. I don't think I can clearly explain why these things have attached to gender in my head, though presumably I'm being affected by cultural tropes to some extent."

The consensus in general was that dominance, whether masculine or feminine, is something that happens in an encounter... not outside it. As Pepper put it, "New guys often want to play hard or do hardcore things, and will often boast and swagger. Kinky women almost always recognize this as dangerous bullshit. Learn to chill out and not take

yourself too seriously, and learn to start with a light careful touch when playing with someone new. Learn to ask for help and guidance, both from others in your S&M community and from your partners."

Scootah agreed: "The first mistake I see newbie doms make is trying too hard to be some kind of bad ass. Admit your inexperience. Be seen learning. Be modest and have a good time. Learn to communicate well, and to really be friends with your prospective partners."

For me, the bottom line of these conversations is that questioning gender roles, and understanding gender complications, is an ongoing process. People have a lot of urges and preferences that are politically inconvenient and which we will never fully understand. Whether we're shaped by biology or culture, those feelings will still exist for now, and we have to deal with them. There are ways to do almost anything such that people respect each other, though -- whatever the implications for gender or power. Violence is complicated ground, but it can be used in balanced and consensual ways that end up bonding people together. *Fifty Shades of Grey* and *Fight Club* are both examples, and I haven't even touched competitive sports!

* * *

This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/04/20/50-shades-of-grey-fight-club-and-the-complications-of-male-dominance/

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ABUSE:

[theory] The Alt Sex Anti-Abuse Dream Team

I wrote this post in 2010 for the high-profile feminist blog Feministe. *If I were to write it today, then I would write it differently. In particular, if I were writing it today, then I would emphasize that there are actually two primary patterns for abusive S&M perpetrators. There are the ones I emphasized in this post, the ones who prey on inexperienced people outside the community... but then there's another category: perpetrators who achieve high status within the community and then use it to get away with non-consensual things. Other BDSMers have been writing about this more and more, and the discussion is really heating up right now, in 2012. My fellow feminist BDSM writer Thomas MacAulay Millar has a particularly long, complex blog series about patterns of abuse in the BDSM community that gives a lot of great reference links to other articles on the same topic. I've mentioned Thomas before; I don't always agree with him, but he's principled and passionate and smart. He blogs at the* Yes Means Yes *blog, and the series is being published post-by-post even as I write this. The first post in the series is available at this link:*
http://yesmeansyesblog.wordpress.com/2012/03/23/theres-a-war-on-part-1-troubles-

been-brewing/

* * *

The Alt Sex Anti-Abuse Dream Team

BDSMers face a lot of stigma around our sexuality, and this can be a major problem when BDSMers are trying to deal with abusive situations. I've written a lot about generally negative conceptions of BDSM -- they can briefly be summarized as:

* S&M is wicked,

* abnormal,

* a sign of mental or emotional instability,

* inherently abusive,

* or even antifeminist.

Given this climate, it's not surprising that two things almost always happen when BDSM and abuse come up:

1) People of all genders who are abused are often unwilling to report. **People of all genders who are abused within BDSM relationships tend to be particularly unwilling to report.** Victim-blaming is already rampant in mainstream society -- just imagine what happens to, for example, a woman who has admitted that she enjoys being consensually slapped across the face, if she attempts to report being raped. And that's assuming the abuse survivor is willing to report in the first place; ze may prefer not to negotiate the minefield of anti-SM stereotypes ze will be up against, ze may be afraid of being outed, etc.

2) Members of the BDSM community sometimes push back against real or perceived anti-SM stigma by talking about how abuse is rare within the BDSM community. A BDSM blog post and comments over at the awesome blog SM-Feminist claim that **not only is abuse within the community rare, but abusive BDSM relationships seem more likely to happen outside the community.** In fact, if you look then you can find posts from submissive women who found that getting into the BDSM community, being exposed to its ideals and concepts, helped them escape or understand their past abusive relationships.

I tend to think that #2 is a really good point -- particularly the bit about how abusive BDSM relationships are more likely to happen outside the community, due in part to lack of resources and support for survivors. For this reason, I tend to stress the role of the community in positive BDSM experiences, and I encourage newcomers to seek out their local community. But lots of people don't have access to a local community at all, especially if they're not in a big city. Plus, lots of people have trouble enjoying their local community for whatever reason, perhaps because they have nothing in common with local S&Mers aside from sexuality, or because they don't have time to integrate into a whole new subculture.

There's also the unfortunate fact that point #2 sometimes reacts with point #1 in a toxic

way -- that is, it can ironically be harder for abuse survivors to talk about abuse within the BDSM community because the community is pushing back so hard against the stereotype of abusive BDSM. **I've spoken to BDSMers who feel that the S&M community pushes back far too hard, and that survivors are being aggressively silenced simply because the rest of us are so invested in fighting mainstream stereotypes.** I have never personally experienced this, but I would not be surprised if I did. And the fact is that I'm sure there are toxic dynamics in some BDSM communities -- we aren't a monolith, folks -- and that even in 100% awesome communities, I'm sure there are at least a few abusive relationships. And **even one abusive relationship in the community is obviously too many.**

As Thomas MacAulay Millar wrote when the most recent abusive BDSM case hit the media, "Our declaration that the abusers are not us has to be substantive." This is something we should be taking action on. But how?

* * *

Dynamics Within the Community

I have personally had excellent experiences within the S&M community. However, I am also pretty thick-skinned (unfortunately, this is partly due to lots of time spent working in a sexist industry); and I have a well-developed sense of my own boundaries. I am saying this not to sound self-congratulatory but because I believe that, due to being thick-skinned, I may be less bothered by actual harassment and pressuring dynamics than others are. Also, I am lucky enough that I've never experienced an assault. Therefore, it's incumbent upon me to listen to how other S&Mers -- especially female or genderqueer S&Mers -- feel about their experiences being pressured within the community.

There are issues that even I have noticed. For example, I think that there is a distasteful tendency to talk about "real BDSM" or "serious BDSM," as if some S&M is more legitimate than other S&M. That's wrong and dangerous because it can make some people feel as though they have to push past their boundaries -- do things they aren't comfortable with -- in order to be accepted, liked, or seen as "real." On the rare occasions that I encounter this, I try to point out the problems right there and then. **There is no such thing as "more real" and "less real" S&M. The only truly important part about any S&M activity is that it happen among enthusiastic, consenting adults.**

Thomas once wrote to me by email that "I tend to think that the dynamics of abuse in the community are a combination of the desire to avoid washing our laundry in public, patriarchy colonizing our own, and the usual thing in small communities where people's willingness to do the right thing in theory bumps up against their personal friends and loyalties." I completely agree. I'd add that similar issues arise in almost all small communities, and it's not fair to blame S&M in itself for these problems. At the same time, though, **it's incumbent upon all BDSMers to contribute to an environment where people who don't want to participate can easily say "no", and can rely on being supported by others when they do**.

* * *

Existing Anti-Abuse Initiatives in the BDSM Community

Finding existing initiatives is a bit of a piecemeal project, but here's what I've run across.

* **A variety of pamphlets and written statements.** One example was released by The Network/La Red, a rather unique anti-abuse organization for lesbians, bi women and trans people. One panel of the pamphlet shows a picture of handcuffs, and the text says:

*The most basic difference between S/M and abuse is **Consent**.*

It is not consent if...

** You did **not** expressly give consent.*

** You are afraid to say **no**.*

** You say **yes** to avoid conflict.*

** You say **yes** to avoid consequences (i.e. losing a job, losing your home, being outed).*

S/M is...

** Always consensual.*

** Done with respect for limits.*

** Enjoyed by all partners.*

** Fun, erotic, and loving.*

** Done with an understanding of trust.*

** Never done with the intent to harm or damage.*

Just because you consent to play does not mean you consent to everything. You have the right to set limits.

(You can look at images of the pamphlet on my Flickr account.)

Some SM organizations have also released statements on SM and abuse, such as the national Leather Leadership Conference and New York's Lesbian Sex Mafia. Note that at the bottom of the LSM page, they mention that they've sensitized a local abuse hotline; if I ever get a grant or something to start a pro-sex anti-abuse center, I'll immediately grill the LSM to see how they got in with that hotline and what they said.

* **Kink Aware counselors.** I talk about this all the time, but I think it bears repeating as often as possible. The National Coalition for Sexual Freedom maintains an online list of Kink Aware Professionals, which is a grassroots effort begun by writer/activist Race Bannon and includes doctors, lawyers, and therapists. The list is pretty much open and opt-in -- professionals go to the KAP site and offer to list themselves there -- and this is one reason it's not a good idea to assume that any given professional will be a great fit for you. Personally, when I was coming into my BDSM identity, I found a Kink Aware therapist to be incredibly helpful -- but while I was finding him, I visited another therapist who was not at all helpful.

When people ask me for kink-friendly survivors' resources, I always tell them to seek a

KAP therapist first.

* **The annual Alternative Sexualities conference.** This is a comparatively new effort from the Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities. They describe it as "a conference for clinicians and researchers, addressing issues around BDSM/Kink sexualities and consensual non-monogamies." 2012 will mark the fifth Conference on Alternative Sexualities. I was on a panel at the 2009 conference in Chicago, and I thought it was pretty awesome, but I am obviously biased.

* **Community workshops.** Most BDSM communities in large cities have educational workshops. These teach SM-related ideas or skills such as community etiquette, how to use various types of equipment, etc. Every SM workshop I have ever attended has emphasized careful negotiation and has, at the very least, mentioned safewords. One workshop -- "The Emotional Aspects of BDSM Play," taught by San Francisco's EduKink -- gave a detailed list of ideas for how to tell BDSM from abuse, which I wrote down:

1) Consent. BDSM is consenting; abuse is not.

a) Assuming consent was given -- was it informed consent? Did everyone know what they were consenting to?

b) Was consent coerced or seduced from the partner? Did everyone feel like they could say no if they wanted? Was anyone worried about suffering negative consequences if they said no?

2) Intent. A BDSM partner intends to have a mutually enjoyable encounter; an abusive partner does not.

a) Did everyone leave the scene feeling somewhat satisfied?

3) Damage. A BDSM partner tries to minimize the actual damage inflicted by their actions; an abusive partner does not.

a) Did the two partners learn what they were doing before they did it? Did they learn how to perform their activities safely?

b) Were the partners aware of the potential risks of their activities?

4) Secrecy. Abuse often happens in secret. This is the hardest one on this checklist, because -- due to the fact that BDSM is a very marginalized, misunderstood sexuality -- BDSM often happens in secret, too. But this is one of the benefits of having an entire subculture that deals with BDSM: we try to look out for each other.

a) Were the two partners involved in the local BDSM scene? Did they get advice from knowledgeable, understanding BDSM people during rough patches in their relationship?

I've heard of one or two workshops specifically focused on "BDSM for Survivors." I've also heard of support groups for BDSM-identified survivors of abuse, but I've never run across one in person. I've said this before, but I'll say it again: I believe that the safest place to have a BDSM relationship is within the BDSM community.

* * *

My Fantasy Sex-Positive, Anti-Abuse Program

You can tell from the above list that relevant community efforts have focused on raising internal awareness, consolidating useful information, and educating. If I were to get a grant or something (ha!), I would certainly look for ways to use it on a dedicated pro-sex, anti-abuse initiative, hopefully more expansive than a hotline, and considerably more extensive than a pamphlet. I've never developed this thought too extensively -- I hate to torture myself when I know there's no money for one of my ideas -- but I know I'd want my Dream Anti-Abuse Team to have the following qualities:

* BDSM is obviously my main interest, because that's how I identify the core of my sexuality. But I have a strong interest in destigmatizing all forms of sexual expression practiced by consenting adults. Everyone involved in my initiative would emphasize that **people of all genders and sexualities could come for help -- whether straight, gay, lesbian, bi, trans, asexual, BDSM, sex worker, polyamorous, swing, or whatever amazing fetish could conceivably come up.**

Ideally, I would personally try to shock the hell out of anyone before I agreed to work with them... because anyone whose face twists up or who gasps at the idea of any kind of consensual weird sex is a person who shouldn't be anywhere near altsexual abuse survivors.

* I'd want **destigmatizing alternative sexuality among the mainstream, especially mainstream anti-abuse organizations,** to be a major focus -- so that abuse survivors could feel less anxious about being misunderstood while seeking help. So I'd need people who were willing to go out and charismatically shock the abuse officers at police stations, feminist organizations, college campuses, etc. I'd want us to be running everything from anti-stigma poster campaigns to sex communication workshops.

* I'd want the program to be **well-advertised to the general public, so that people who aren't in the community -- yet who are practicing S&M or poly or whatever on their own -- could still find us**.

* Of course we'd also do the more traditional work of offering walk-in counseling to abuse survivors, including help making a concrete plan, altsexual-friendly legal advice, and so on.

So.

Anyone willing to fund my Dream Team?

* * *

This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/01/16/the-alt-sex-anti-abuse-dream-team/

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Section 1 Study Guide

A regular reader who goes by SnowdropExplodes suggested that I add "study guides" to the end of each section of this book in order to pull it together, and I thought it was a good idea. (See why I love my readers?) I'm sure that others could find this insufferably patronizing, however; if you're one of them, feel free not to read the guides! I'm just trying to offer questions for further thought, and give some insight on why I organized this book the way I did. This section was intended to pull together the ideas I see as "basic" or "building blocks" for feminist sex, both in theory and in practice.

* * *

1. Have any of these pieces felt relevant to how you communicate with your partners? Have any pieces felt irrelevant or incomprehensible? Can you see any overarching themes that guide which ones felt relevant, and which ones felt incomprehensible?

1a. If you could give your partners one piece of advice about communicating with you, what would it be?

1b. Are there areas of communication that you feel you need to work on? (For example, Clarisse often thinks that she should work on her non-verbal communication, and has occasionally had trouble being direct with her partners about what she wants.)

1c. What ideas about sex and communication do you think you've absorbed from friends, parents, and your larger cultural environment?

* * *

2. What stereotypes do you see acting on your sexuality?

2a. Have you come up with any mental tactics for thinking around those stereotypes? What are they? (For example, Clarisse sees the "S&M superpowers" concept as a positive way of framing S&M, so it doesn't feel "broken" or "dark.")

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3. Are there any areas of your sexuality where you feel trapped or stalled? Can you think of ways that you want to move forward on those, or do you think it might be a good idea to take some time off from those activities instead?

* * *

4. If you were feeling anxious about a relationship or uncertain about your boundaries, who would you turn to in order to talk about that? Do you have friends (online or offline) or other resources where you could find advice?

4a. Are there unique problems affecting abusive relationships within the communities you frequent? How do sexual stereotypes affect how you and your friends perceive both positive relationships and abusive relationships?

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5. What are the overarching patterns that you see within the pieces in this section? How are these disparate topics relevant to each other?

5a. Is consent complicated?

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SECTION 2:

Activism and Allies

In which we explore activism and other topics tangentially related to S&M feminism -- from sex work, to polyamory and monogamy, to the nature of masculinity.

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When I think of this section, I think of:

Abuse of power comes as no surprise.

~ Jenny Holzer

I think of Clarisse as the John Stuart Mills of sexuality.

~ one of my ex-boyfriends

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ACTIVISM:

[theory] Grassroots Organizing For Feminism, S&M, HIV, and Everything Else

I wrote this in March 2011 for Bitch Magazine's *Feminist Coming-Out Day Blog Carnival. The goal was to talk about feminist "click" moments, and my entry was predictably wide-ranging and idiosyncratic.*

* * *

Grassroots Organizing For Feminism, S&M, HIV, and Everything Else

Earlier this month, my sex-positive documentary film series screened *Jane: An Abortion Service.* The film tells the extraordinary story of "Jane," an underground network of women in Chicago who provided thousands of safe abortions in the years before abortion was legal. It was totally inspiring.

Jane was started accidentally by a woman named Heather Booth. Booth was a student at the University of Chicago in the late 1960s when another woman came and asked her --

secretly, of course -- whether she knew any abortion doctors. Heather Booth found one, and she also found that other women started coming to her for references.

As one woman in the film put it, in those days, women who sought abortions were all "hysterical and desperate and scared": if you needed an abortion, you knew you would have to come up with some fabulous amount of money and take a life-threatening risk. Some women committed suicide when they got pregnant instead. Information about abortion was at a premium.

So Heather Booth began looking for abortion doctors, and better than that, she started **vetting** them. After finding the doctors, she sought testimonials about those doctors. Common problems with abortion doctors ranged from being rude to actually assaulting their patients; some doctors, who already charged sky-high prices, would demand more money at the last minute. Booth kept a list of abortion doctors who didn't do those things. Pretty soon, there were other women who had her list too, and they were vetting doctors and spreading the word as well. The group also provided counseling before and after the procedure, letting the patients know what they could expect -- physically and emotionally. They called themselves "Jane": a woman who called them and asked for "Jane" was seeking an abortion.

After some time, the women of Jane figured out that abortion isn't a complex procedure, and they convinced a doctor to teach them how to do it safely. And then they taught each other. So then they didn't have to refer patients to doctors: they did all the abortions themselves, and they did them for whatever the patient could spare rather than charging prices that were out of reach for many women. Jane members continued to provide emotional support, as well: in the documentary, one member reminisces about how she would have patients over to dinner with her kids and talk to them for a while before performing the procedure. It got to the point where doctors and medical students sent women to Jane, rather than getting referrals from Jane.

That is positive activism. That is building the world we want to see.

When abortion was legalized in 1973, the group quietly disbanded. Some members of Jane went on to be involved in other parts of the feminist movement or to found respected women's health organizations.

It's not that Jane had no problems; the organization was not transparent, for example, and it sounds like there was a fair amount of gossip and internal difficulties. These are typical issues within small groups, and the stigma and anxiety of what they were doing can't possibly have helped, but still, it's important to work against those problematic patterns from the beginning. It's worth it, I think; I'm increasingly convinced that the most positive direct change can be traced to small, grassroots, community groups. Which means that making sure your small, grassroots community group is egalitarian but well-organized can have ripple effects all down the line.

Another example of such a group might be Chicago's Rape Victim Advocates. RVA was established in 1974 by doctors and nurses who were appalled by how badly rape survivors were treated in the emergency room. Back then, there was no public understanding of how traumatic rape could be, and little understanding of survivors'

experience, even from police and doctors. (An older female friend of mine who was raped in 1970 once told me that she tried to talk to a psychiatrist about what happened. He sighed and said, "Really, do you think that's important?") Rape Victim Advocates has always been a network of volunteers who are on-call to come and talk to rape survivors, but since 1974, it has also developed from a fragile activist group into one with funding and political presence.

And on a somewhat different note, S&M community organizing is really quite good. A lot of people don't realize that most S&M community dungeons (unlike the professional dungeons run by sex workers) are nonprofit organizations, kind of like community centers. (No, seriously.) People don't just go to community dungeons to do S&M -- they also go to community dungeons for discussion groups or educational workshops, to learn how to perform certain activities safely.

Much like Jane, the S&M community has also created a network of necessary references: the Kink Aware Professionals list. If you've read my work before, you've probably read about this list, because it had a huge impact on my life and I like to spread the word. S&M activists in San Francisco realized, years ago, that there was a need for lawyers and doctors who understood their lives and wouldn't stigmatize their choices, so they wrote three names on a piece of paper and passed it around. Now, the Kink Aware Professionals list is an international online directory hosted by the nonprofit National Coalition for Sexual Freedom.

Again, it's not like there are no problems in the S&M community; people gossip, people backstab, people fuck up. There's little vetting process for educators or for people who list themselves on Kink Aware Professionals, and a lot of people run kink classes at least as much from a desire for status as from a desire to educate. But still, I think the S&M community is engaging in positive activism... more than a lot of us even realize.

This was a lesson that really hit home for me when I spent a year in Africa working on HIV mitigation. One of the reasons international aid is so complicated is that figuring out how to help a community that's not yours is incredibly hard. A lot of well-meaning Americans (including myself) go abroad with little understanding of how hard it is. The reality is that assisting with, for example, public health in a foreign place entails learning the social fabric of that country in a way that outsiders can only do with tons of sustained effort... and we're **still** unlikely to be as good as someone who grew up there. One of the reasons -- maybe the biggest reason -- I left was that it was **so obvious** to me that I was a better activist in the USA... even when I wasn't trying to do activism. (When I was there, I received one letter from an American girl asking for advice on how to do African activism. My advice to her can be summarized as, "It's harder than you think, and you might consider staying home where you're awesomer.")

When HIV began destroying the gay community, the most effective and important measures to curb it came from people like Richard Berkowitz, the actual gay activist who wrote a safer sex pamphlet on his home typewriter and then distributed it by hand. They saw a need and they did something about it. Just like Jane. Just like S&M educators.

You are probably already part of more communities than you might realize. If you go to a university, you're part of that community. Whether you live in a city neighborhood or a

small town, you're part of that community. If you go to particular clubs, you're in those communities. There may be aspects of your identity that could align with a community as well: for example, if you read science fiction there are conventions for that (although of course, identity communities don't always work for everyone with that identity). These are places where your knowledge already makes you powerful... so keep an eye out for needs. (It's also worth considering getting involved in an intentional community. I'm kind of psycho about housing co-ops, for example, because they are awesome. I personally am a member of North American Students of Cooperation, but there are other groups, and there are also independent co-ops that aren't part of larger networks.)

We live in an unstable and fast-paced age. I don't know how people in most other countries feel, but I know that here in the USA, there is a quite pervasive and quite justified anxiety among everyone I know in the middle class. Many of our safety nets are evaporating, and it's not at all clear that they will be replaced. But **no matter how much the people in power fuck us over, we'll never be totally screwed as long as we're not isolated and we talk to each other.**

One of the former members of Jane, a white-haired feminist with such powerful energy that she practically glows through the screen, says in the documentary: "Don't stay with people who tell you you're crazy and useless. Don't stay where you're weak." That's what I call an activist click moment: find the other people like you, and organize with them. That applies to feminism, it applies to sexuality, it applies to public health. Go where you're strong and make your people stronger.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/03/29/grassroots-organizing-for-feminism-sm-hiv-and-everything-else/

The film Jane: An Abortion Service *is available from the distributor Women Make Movies:*

http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c410.shtml

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ACTIVISM:

[storytime] Interview with Richard Berkowitz, Star of *Sex Positive* and Icon of Safer Sex Activism

Richard Berkowitz is an interesting guy. He was active in the gay community in the 1970s and 80s as an S&M sex worker, so he's got plenty of experience with all kinds of sexual history. Not only that, but he also wrote the very first safer sex pamphlet ever, when HIV began storming through the gay community. The pamphlet was called "How to Have Sex in an Epidemic"; Berkowitz literally wrote it at home on his typewriter and

then distributed copies by hand. Then he was slammed by his own community for doing so... well, read on and learn more about what happened next.

I was honored to interview Berkowitz in early 2009. I really love it when I get the chance to talk to boundary-breaking activists who were around before I was born, especially if their domain is sexuality. I feel a combination of both exhilaration and despair during these discussions -- exhilaration because I learn how far we've come, and despair because I can see how we keep making the same mistakes again and again and again.

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Interview with Richard Berkowitz, Star of *Sex Positive* and Icon of Safer Sex Activism

Our second film at my awesome sex-positive film series was *Sex Positive,* a fascinating documentary about the history of safer sex. I'll be honest: I was psyched about *Sex Positive* from day one, long before I'd even seen it. It was the first film I chose for my film list. In fact, the whole idea for the film series came out of a conversation I had with Lisa (our lovely Hull-House Museum education coordinator) in which I said that I wanted to see *Sex Positive,* and then added, "There are so many sexuality movies I want to see. You and I should have a regular movie night!" She looked at me and said thoughtfully, "You know, I bet people besides us would come to that...."

Sex Positive tells the story of Richard Berkowitz -- and how he was one of the first to spread the word about safer sex in America. Berkowitz, a talented writer, started out as a hot-blooded participant in the promiscuous gay bathhouse culture; later, he became an S&M hustler (i.e., a sex worker). When AIDS started decimating the gay community, Berkowitz was instrumental in teaching his community (and the world) about safer sex. As it became clear to some medical professionals that sexual promiscuity spread AIDS, Berkowitz tried to tell the world about their findings. But there was a huge backlash against him -- because in those days, the promiscuous bathhouse culture was seen by many gay men as a huge part of identifying as gay and sex-positive... and anyone who argued against it, or tried to modify it, was therefore cast by many people as sex-negative.

After we screened *Sex Positive,* I reviewed it on my blog, and Richard Berkowitz himself read the review! He left a comment offering feedback, and I was so thrilled and honored to hear from him that I emailed him right away. We talked a little bit, and met in person last time I was in New York City -- and I practically begged him to let me interview him by email. Here's the results: a discussion of Richard's history with S&M; what he thinks about advocacy; his feelings about the gay community and its history; and where he finds himself in his life right now.

Clarisse Thorn: In *Sex Positive,* you mention that you didn't initially think of yourself as a BDSM type, but that you had partners who convinced you to do it. Do you think you would have gotten into BDSM if you hadn't had partners pressuring you to do it? Do you think you would have gotten into it if you hadn't been able to make money at it?

Richard Berkowitz: I was filmed talking in three- to four-hour sessions over the course of a year about difficult, often painful, personal history. At times I felt uncomfortable, I

made mistakes, so there are moments in *Sex Positive* that I wish I could clarify -- but it's not my film. That's why I'm thrilled that you're giving me the first opportunity to address the moments that make me cringe when I see the movie -- and what amazed me is that you nailed most of them.

Me -- pressured into S&M? Hell, no. I stumbled across BDSM porn in college, and was both appalled and more turned on than I was to any other porn. I pursued a few experiences as a novice when I was in college, and I was completely turned off to the scene for years. The few Tops I met were clumsy, distracted by fetishes that bored me, and I was convinced a bottom could easily get hurt -- so I walked away.

When I began hustling in NYC, I was an angry activist and it attracted S&M bottoms that were happy to teach me what I could do with my anger that was erotic and consensual. To that I added what I had learned that Tops did wrong -- and presto! I got really good at it fast -- and I loved it. I was doing two or three scenes a day, but because I could often steer a scene to what turned me on, it felt more like play than work.

If I hadn't had been trained as a Top by older, experienced bottoms who were hiring me, I still would have had S&M experiences on my own. But I doubt that I would have gotten as heavily into the scene if it wasn't for hustling. That's where I earned my S&M PhD.

In 1979, S&M was considered the fallback scene for aging hustlers -- it was what you turned to when you were losing your youth. There was such a dearth of good Tops. But I had the raw material to be a great Top at 23, and I built quite a reputation on word-of-mouth referrals and repeats. Many of my clients became close friends.

CT: Where do you place BDSM in your sexual identity and self-conception? Do you see it as deeply part of you, or something you chose? Do you think of your BDSM urges as coming from a place as deep, as intrinsic, as your gay orientation?

RB: I think it's too late for me to answer that question. Turning my libido into an occupation at 23 changed me in both good ways and bad. It would take a book to explain -- so let me just say that as a product of gay male sex in the 70s, there was an element of power intrinsic to the sexuality of the times. That shaped me. I don't see vanilla sex and S&M sex as mutually exclusive because I believe in Tops and bottoms -- and that's the basis of BDSM. "Tops and bottoms" are not exclusive to BDSM; the terms are widely used for assigning roles of power in sex in general. Gore Vidal said, "There is no such thing as gay and straight -- only top and bottom." I believe both are true.

But one shouldn't lose sight of the fact that a third of my living space for the past three decades was a sound-proofed dungeon.

I think that a culture like ours that's based on competition, as opposed to cooperation, can be extremely sadomasochistic. I think bad S&M can be found in many aspects of our daily life, and good S&M is just eroticizing aspects of being human that can enhance sex immensely for some.

CT: What kind of BDSM advocacy have you encountered? What kind of sex work advocacy have you encountered? What did you think of what you saw? Do you have any ideas about how to make those movements effective? Do you have any fears

about those movements? Would you consider being part of those movements?

RB: My only fear about those movements would be if they didn't exist! My neighbor down the hall for the past 25 years built my dungeon and was a co-founder of Gay Male SM Activists, but I always had too much hot sex going on at home to be interested in meetings. Plus, I never stopped feeling like a pariah in the gay community because of the attacks on me and my writing since AIDS began. You reach a point where you just assume people hate you because it's easier than trying to figure out who doesn't.

I fiercely support BDSM advocacy, but mainly from a distance. There's a limited number of body blows any activist can take before we just retreat. I had my fill -- but the response to *Sex Positive* and the new Obama era is nudging me out of my shell. I had a breakup a few years ago that devastated me, so I've been out of the scene for almost three years. Now I'm trying to reinvent myself, find one person I can retreat from the world with. I've never lied about S&M being an intrinsic part of my sexuality, and because of my early bad experiences with BDSM, I'm thrilled and inspired by advocates for it. If there had been BDSM advocacy when I came into BDSM, then I don't think I would have had the bad experiences I mentioned earlier. As a BDSM sex worker, I met so many men who had horrible tales of being hurt in scenes, and I did my best to be an antidote for that.

CT: On my blog, you commented that "Of course BDSM was a source of joy in my life but I put it aside when it robs me from having a platform to champion safe sex to the largest possible audience, which BDSM often has." Could you talk more about that?

RB: Smear campaigns are hard to pin down, and there's no way to know how much of the contempt against me or my writing was due to my BDSM, my sex work, my safe sex evangelism or simply me. I'm just a dangling pinata for people who have issues with sex!

There are gay people of my generation who are as uninformed and rabidly anti-BDSM sex as homophobes are about gay sex.

I can't think of anyone who has gone on film with such brutally honest testimony about their radical sexual history as I did in *Sex Positive.* It felt like a huge risk and you can see my anxiety in the film, but to me, this level of honesty is crucial to pro-sex activism. People are so dishonest about sex; many would never talk publicly about their private sexual behavior -- and they don't want others doing it either, so it's not easy.

There was a doctor I saw once when AIDS began who heard I was into S&M. As he went to take blood from me, he stabbed the needle into my arm. I bolted out of the chair screaming, and he said coyly, "Oh, sorry, I thought you liked pain." How can I not feel reticent talking about BDSM considering so many people I've met like that? And then I think, how can I not?

I've seen the most courageous pro-sex writers and activists attacked, pilloried and silenced because of their honesty in writing about their kinky sexual histories. I shudder when I recall the vicious smears against pro-sex feminists by anti-porn feminists back in the early 80s. I don't want to invite that bile into my life, especially now, when my circle of gay male friends are no longer alive and here to support me when I go out on a limb with my personal radical sexual issues in public.

So why did I speak out? Why do I still speak out? Because I owed so much to the army of men who loved and supported me over the years and no longer have a voice, and because gay men were dying. It was no time to be squeamish about sex. It still isn't.

CT: Do you have any regrets? -- and, concurrently, what are you most proud of? Did the making of the film *Sex Positive* bring any regret or pride to the surface for you?

RB: I have a few regrets about *Sex Positive,* but they pale next to what I've gained. I've been to more cities with this movie in one year than I've been to in my entire life. Young people have been extraordinarily supportive and kind, and it helps me to let go of the past. I've been stuck in the past for so long -- it's deadening, but I finally feel that this movie is breaking me free, to finally let go and move on to write about other things. For that, I'm forever indebted to Daryl Wein, the documentary's director.

What I'm most proud of is how much work I did on safe sex that no one even knows about. I'm putting it all on the Internet as a free archive, as soon as I can find or pay someone to help me with the technical stuff. I'm from the age of typewriters.

CT: Is there anything you'd like to add? Please feel free to also respond directly to points I made when I talked about *Sex Positive* on my blog.

RB: I loved S&M hustling before AIDS so much -- sometimes, when I talk about it, I become the part of me that tied people up and dominated them; it's like a mental erection. I get lost in the reverie of being an erotic, arrogant Top. I begged director Daryl Wein to delete me saying that clients would tell me that I could do whatever I wanted to them except fuck them, and then I would proceed to do just that. I said that when I was lost in a persona, and it makes me sound like a rapist!

The truth is, my most valued expertise as a hustler was teaching men who were afraid of getting fucked how to relax, how to douche, how to open up, how to explore the intense pleasures of receptive anal intercourse and anal orgasm without any pain. I would never rape or violate anyone's consent -- and certainly not customers I wanted to come back! I had tremendous empathy for how difficult it can be to learn how to get anally fucked because I was never able -- or had the desire -- to do it without being high on drugs. (You have to remember how pervasive recreational drug use was during the sexual revolution. There were articles in the gay press saying how cocaine was good for you. We didn't understand addiction then as we do now. And we paid a heavy price for that innocence and ignorance.)

When I began hustling in NYC, the lesbian and gay liberation movement was ten years old -- and about that mature. We grew up in such an intensely erotophobic and homophobic culture -- there was no way to escape it, even after we accepted that we were gay. We didn't always treat each other well, and it permeated our sexual expression whether it was vanilla or S&M.

You mention in your blog post that you are wary of how I talk about BDSM as arising from "self-loathing" and "insecurity" and negative cultural pressures on the gay community. Yes -- in S&M **and** in vanilla sex -- I saw how we brought a lot of the culture's contempt to what we did. But, as I say in *Sex Positive,* many of us came to

realize this, and we understood that a lot of sexual fantasies are socially constructed by the times that shaped us. Many of us came to realize that sexual fantasies don't diminish us as people -- they can actually help free and enrich us when we understand what we're doing.

I'm reluctant to put myself forward as a role model for BDSM and sex work, because of what happened to me after AIDS when I went back to hustling. I was furious that there was no place in the community for me to do safe sex education. I felt so hurt that some people only saw me as a sex worker/sadomasochist and that political differences got in the way of saving sexually active gay men's lives. You can't imagine the rage I felt that it took two entire years **after** we wrote and published "How to Have Sex in an Epidemic" for NYC to do its first safe sex campaign. I went back to hustling in such despair that I was an addiction waiting to happen, and that's what did.

In the end, though, BDSM and my love for it is part of what saved my life. If I weren't so busy hustling with BDSM before AIDS and safe sex, I would have spent much more time at the baths having high risk sex, and died long ago. I think each of us has a limit to how much sex and how many different partners our spirits can bear. Sex can become an addiction, and when you reach that point, people use recreational drugs to keep that level of hypersexual activity going. If I had found a place in safe sex education, my life would have been a much happier, healthier journey. But I never lose sight of how grateful I am to still be here, or how much joy and pleasure sexual freedom gave me until the world I loved started collapsing all around me and taking the men I loved along with it.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2009/03/23/interview-with-richard-berkowitz-star-of-sex-positive-and-icon-of-safer-sex-activism/

Check out Richard Berkowitz's web site to read more about him and investigate his book (which I admit I have not read), Stayin' Alive: The Invention of Safe Sex:

http://richardberkowitz.com/

And seriously, if you get the chance, watch Daryl Wein's awesome documentary Sex Positive:

http://www.sexpositive-themovie.com/

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ABUSE:

[theory] Social Responsibility Within Activism

I wrote this post in 2010 for Thanksgiving (the original post had a bunch of "thank yous" at the end, which I removed from this version). The questions here seem to be some of the

biggest recurring questions in my life. Later events have taught me a lot about work that has already been done on accountability within communities. In particular, I want to highlight the book The Revolution Starts At Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities *(edited by Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha), which was published in 2011.*

But there's a lot of other work out there on how to deal with a perpetrator of violence without resorting to our corrupt and violent established prison system. People of color should be credited for much of this work, because communities of color are rarely well-served by the criminal justice system, and thus have particular incentives to seek alternatives. Sometimes, this field is called "transformative justice" or "restorative justice." Here is a post that links to a number of resources on transformative justice: http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/01/30/some-transformative-justice-links/

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Social Responsibility Within Activism

Tonight I had Thanksgiving dinner with my mother and her boyfriend. Some friends of my mother attended, one of whom is a lesbian who I'll call Kay. Kay attended dinner with her mother, who is unaware of Kay's sexual orientation. One of the reasons Kay's mom doesn't know about Kay's sexual orientation is that Kay's mom has already behaved quite badly towards Kay's elder sister, who is an out-of-the-closet lesbian.

I knew this whole situation going in, and one thing that struck me was how much of a nice person Kay's mom is. I mean... she's **really nice**. I mean, she clearly tries to be a good person. She also tried really hard to help me do the dishes. (I didn't let her because I wanted them all to myself.)

I've been thinking a lot lately about how to engage with people who have done bad things, or who are currently doing things I think are bad (like shaming their lesbian daughters). It wouldn't have been right to throw my sex-positive ideas on the table while talking to Kay's mom -- mostly because Kay specifically asked me not to, ahead of time. But. The most powerful tool for getting people to reconsider their stigma against alternative sexuality is personal engagement. Don't I have some responsibility here? Is there something I can do?

Other examples of this are rife. One very intense, very important issue I grappled with this week was having a friend email me to inform me that another friend -- someone I like and admire a lot -- has been credibly accused of sexual assault by a person who will never press charges. This has come up before in my life... every time it's a little different, and yet so many things are the same: a person is assaulted, the news gets out among friends, the survivor doesn't press charges, there is confusion among the friends about how to act, eventually things die down, and I feel as though I should have done more.

When I was in high school, one of my closest male friends raped a female acquaintance of mine. She didn't press charges and they later had a romance that was, to all appearances, consensual. I pieced events together slowly -- he did acknowledge what he'd done, though never directly to me. I didn't know what to do, at the time, and I still feel as though I should have done so much more. He and I were so close. I never had the nerve

to directly talk to him about what happened, because -- even though we never talked directly about it -- I saw evidence that he felt terrible about it, and I was sure that I could devastate him by talking about it more. But still... I should have talked to him.

I also feel as though I should have supported her more, but I don't know what I could have said. There were people who told her that she shouldn't be having a consensual relationship with her rapist. It seemed wrong to tell her that -- I felt like it eroded her agency, attacked her right to choose -- so I didn't say it. If I had said it, though, would that have been helpful to her? What could I have done to be a better resource for her? Especially given that I was such close friends with him?

I was young(er), but that's no excuse. Then again, what am I excusing? I did nothing. But I should have done more.

Now, again, I have a friend, a good friend, who assaulted someone. It's a friend in the local S&M community. I don't know the survivor at all. I have to talk to my friend about it, but what do I say, and what happens next? Feminism instructs us that we should listen to the voices of survivors, that community mores and community condemnation are what stops rape from happening. I believe these things to be true; and there are people close to me who have survived rape, and I really want to make sure I'm doing everything I can to ensure that rape stops happening. But I intensely wish that I had more guidance on what exactly to say, how exactly to act, to change the mores.

I emailed my ex-boyfriend Mr. Chastity for advice, because he's got one of the finest ethical minds I've ever been lucky enough to engage with. Here's part of what he wrote back:

I've tried to distill your messages into a few questions, and I ended up with "How does one parse a situation in which a friend, and an otherwise noble person, seems to have done serious wrong?" and "What are a person's moral obligations in this case?"

Nobody is composed of unmixed goodness or evil, no matter how much of a paragon/fiend 1) they seem to be or 2) their principles require. People we respect and love are not forces of nature or avatars of their cause of choice, no matter how thoroughly they embody it to us. I don't say this because I think you haven't considered it, but because I know I've had a lot of trouble absorbing it over the years and think it might therefore bear restating to others, too.

As an individual, a person has a relatively large degree of freedom in action and association. I think where this case becomes truly difficult to consider is when we bring in justice and the community. Because the means of enforcement of the rules of these communities is so interpersonal, one's interpersonal actions take on an unusual role of community-level justice as well as merely justice between two people. I can't see how it could ever be good to allow things like this to just slide. Honestly, I'm not sure what else you can do but (as you suggest in one of your messages) politely ask your friend about their take on the story. If nothing else, it will demonstrate that people are paying attention to this thing and might give you some insight into their character and opinions of the issue.

He's right. I agree. But. What now? How do I ask, what do I say? How can I tell if my

friend has dealt with whatever healing has to take place in order for such assaults not to happen again?

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2010/11/26/social-responsibility-activism-and-giving-thanks/

It is really worth reading about work that's already been done on transformative justice:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/01/30/some-transformative-justice-links/

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BOUNDARIES:

[storytime] Taking Care Of Each Other

This was originally published in 2012 at the girl-power site OffOurChests.com.

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Taking Care Of Each Other

As a sex educator, I think a lot about how to teach boundaries. I try to come up with exercises, stories, maxims that could help people respect their own bodies, minds, and desires; and of course I also think about how to encourage people to respect others' boundaries. But the biggest influences on a person's boundaries have nothing to do with what I teach. Good boundaries are (hopefully) demonstrated by parents, influenced by friends, and encouraged by partners.

Within a community, though, I also think it's really important not to tell people what to do. I believe that it's crucial to be a good resource for the people close to us, without trying to force them to do what we think is best. That way, we can both build trust and foster independence. On the other hand, sometimes it's hard to know how to do that when I know more about a certain subject than someone else. It is so powerfully tempting to tell them what I think they should do!

I was thinking about this recently when, out of the blue, I remembered something that happened when I was 16 or 17. I'd just had a nasty breakup, I was really unhappy about my ex, and I was trying marijuana. I had never smoked before.

There were a bunch of other people my age present -- including a guy who'd been flirting with me for a while. When he passed me the marijuana, he kissed me. I kissed back. I wasn't attracted to him, but I felt so empty and hurt, and I guess it was reassuring that someone wanted me, despite the fact that my ex-boyfriend didn't.

Also around was a girl who I'll call Lena. I had always seen Lena as tough and no-

nonsense, but I didn't know much else about her. I think she probably considered me a bit naive. Anyway, Lena watched the situation and my body language; she knew that it was my first time smoking. A few minutes later, she took me aside. I don't remember the exact conversation, but I seem to recall that it went something like this:

"Clarisse," Lena said, "how are you feeling?"

"I'm not sure," I said. Truth be told, I felt a bit numb.

Lena looked directly into my face. "How far do you want to go tonight?" she asked.

I looked away. I felt embarrassed because she seemed so composed. I felt like an airhead compared to her. We were standing next to a wooden wall, and I pretended to study the wood-grain. "I don't know," I said vaguely.

"If you can tell me how far you want to go tonight," Lena said firmly, "then I'll make sure nothing goes past that. Do you want to keep making out? Do you want to do more than make out?"

I traced a knot in the wood with my finger. "Making out," I decided.

"Okay," Lena said, and nodded. I don't remember if she said anything else, but as she took me back to the group I still felt a little embarrassed -- and also incredibly relieved.

I wonder if I ever thanked Lena? I should have; maybe I'll try to find her on Facebook or something. Because I really did feel a lot safer that night, knowing that Lena was looking out for me. I made out with that gentleman a little bit more, but after a while I put a stop to it, and nothing else happened.

Maybe if Lena hadn't been there, I still would have had the wherewithal to stop making out with him; or maybe I would have felt so confused, anxious, numb that I let it go further. (And I can tell you for sure that I'm glad it didn't go further.) Or, God forbid, maybe if she hadn't been there then I would have been actively pressured into something that I actively objected to.

Before that, it had never occurred to me to set a clear boundary before I hooked up with a guy. That's an important lesson in itself! Even more importantly, though, Lena didn't tell me what to do. She didn't say anything about how I should be sexual, or who I should do it with. She didn't shame me for what was up. She just asked me what I wanted, and then she offered me her support.

Certainly, Lena is just one small piece in the puzzle of my life. But I still remember her, and I admire and thank her. My parents have offered me a lot of support throughout my life, both in my relationships and otherwise. I've had partners who helped show me what it means to create a low-pressure sexual environment, or who helped me learn clear sexual communication. Still, Lena stands out in my mind -- someone I barely knew, yet someone who helped show me what it means to be among women who stand up for each other and help preserve each other's boundaries.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://offourchests.com/taking-care-of-each-other/

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MANLINESS:

[theory] Questions I Want To Ask Entitled Cis Het Men

I wrote this piece in 2009. It was the culmination of years I'd spent thinking about masculinity, manliness, and men's gender role. I was relatively new to blogging, and I hadn't yet established myself. I thought that the most controversial things I would ever write would be about S&M. I was wrong.

I published this in three parts, and it got a huge response. The major feminist blog Alas! A Blog *asked to repost it, for example, but there was a much bigger reaction among non-feminist and anti-feminist men. Some wrote responses with titles like "Answers for an Entitled Feminist." Others actually came over to my blog and engaged me, with varying results. It kicked off a long, dense discussion in my blog Comments section, which lasted for over a year and thousands of comments. I wrote a number of followups, including some that got me labeled "brainwashed by the patriarchy" by other feminist women.*

Some of the guys I was talking to got me interested in the "pickup artist subculture" or "seduction community" -- a group of men who trade tips, tricks, and tactics on how to seduce women. Eventually, I did an in-depth investigation of that subculture and wrote the book Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser: Long Interviews with Hideous Men, *which contains some of my best work on masculinity, communication, and sexuality. You can buy that on Smashwords at this link:*
https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/144451

One thing I've discovered over the last few years, as I learned more about the history of feminism, is that there are excellent reasons why most feminists are unwilling to talk about men's problems. There's a ton of politics involved, and a lot of very justified fears about the political ground we could lose. We still have a long way to go when it comes to gender equality. But I do believe that those fears are often overblown.

And I've also discovered that there's a subgroup of feminists that's much more likely to be open to talking about men's experience: it's the sex-positive feminists, especially the S&M feminists. To be sure, there are exceptions. Plenty of S&M feminists see no reason to discuss men's experience, and of course, plenty of S&M feminists don't like my writing in particular. But most feminist essays I've found about masculinity were written by women who openly admitted that they were into S&M -- Gayle Rubin, author of the pioneering sexuality essay "Thinking Sex," is one good example. Maybe the S&M feminists are the ones most likely to intuitively understand that power is never a one-dimensional picture or a one-way street.

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Questions I Want To Ask Entitled Cis Het Men, Part 1: Who Cares?

Why do I care about masculinity?

I'm rather perverted, but not enormously queer. I present as femme, and -- although I've been known to tease my sensitive (frequently long-haired) lovers for being "unmasculine" -- I fall in love with men. I'm hardly one to go for the "manly man" type, but at heart, I love knowing that I'm fucking a man.

However, because I'm cisgendered and straight, I feel profoundly at a loss when trying to articulate problems of (for lack of a better phrase) "Men's Empowerment." The issues don't feel "native" to me; I've intersected with these questions mainly through the lens of lovers and friends. Watching their struggle is demoralizing, but trying to imagine how I can give them feedback is more demoralizing.

A male friend once wrote to me, "I think you personally find expressions of masculinity **hot**, but you also have no patience with sexism. You've caught on that it's tricky for men to figure out how to deliver both of these things you need, that you don't have a lot of good direction to give to fellas about it, and that neither does anyone else."

So:

How can men be supportive and non-oppressive while remaining overtly masculine?

On top of my limited perspective, there's been an echoing lack of discourse -- that is, very little mainstream acknowledgement of the problems of masculinity. The primary factor in that silence is that normative cis men themselves tend to be flatly unwilling to discuss gender/sex issues. Often, their first objection is that the discussion is neither important nor relevant. This is true even within subcultures centered around sexual analysis, like the BDSM world -- I once met a cis male BDSMer who said, "Why bother talking about male sexuality? It's the norm. Fish don't have a word for water."

But *if masculine sexuality is water and we're fish, why doesn't that motivate us to examine it more -- not less?*

Don't get me wrong: I agree that America's sexual conceptions are centered around stereotypical male sexuality, and I agree that this is damaging and problematic. Believe me, I'm **furious** that it took me many years to reconceive "actual" sex around acts other than good ole penis-in-vagina penetration! But if American stereotypes and ideas of sexuality are male-centered, then surely that makes it **more** useful for us to be thinking about male sexuality -- not less.

And those male-centered ideas of sexuality aren't centered around all men -- just stereotypical men. LGBTQ men are obvious examples whose sexuality falls outside the norm; fortunately for them, they've created some spaces to discuss that. But there are lots of other non-normative guys who aren't gay or queer, yet feel very similar sexual alienation -- and because there's so little discourse about masculinity outside LGBTQ circles, they usually just don't talk about it.

What does it mean to be a cis het man whose sexuality isn't normative? Which straight cis guys don't fit -- and hence, feel alienated from -- our current overarching sexual

stereotypes?

Guys who identify as straight BDSM submissives are one fabulous example of non-normative men who are frequently alienated from mainstream masculine sexuality, but who often don't have a forum. Men with small penises are a second. There are lots of others. In the words of sex blogger and essayist Thomas Millar: "The common understanding of male sexuality is a stereotype, an ultra-narrow group of desires and activities oriented around PIV [penis-in-vagina], anal intercourse and blowjobs; oriented around cissexual women partners having certain very narrow groups of physical characteristics."

Still, that doesn't mean that straight, dominant, big-dicked dudes who love boning thin chicks feel totally okay about the current state of affairs. It just means they tend to have less immediate motivation to question it. They also have less of an eye for spotting gender oppression, because -- though they've got their own boxes hemming them in -- they're still more privileged than the rest of us, and the nature of privilege is to blind the privileged class to its existence.

A male submissive once told me, "Lots of heteronormative men know something is wrong with the way we think about sex and gender. I can see them struggling with it when we talk. They can't put their finger on it; they have a hard time engaging it. But I engage it all the time; I have to, because my sexuality opposes it."

When is it to a man's advantage to examine and question masculinity and stereotypes of male sexuality? Which men are motivated to do so?

It's tempting to assert that men whose desires fit neatly (or at least mostly) within the stereotype have it made -- after all, their sexuality works within the norm so many of us struggle to escape. But I've had this assumption corrected several times, usually by smart "stereotypical" men themselves. At one point, while developing a sexuality workshop, I sent the outline to a bunch of friends. The original draft contained this paragraph: "Our sexual scripts favor a certain stereotype of men and male sexual pleasure, which makes it hard for women to figure out what we really want and what we really enjoy, and also makes it harder for non-stereotypical men to figure that out." One friend sent that paragraph back, having quietly appended: "... as well as for stereotypical men to discover or explore new desires beyond the stereotypical script."

When we discuss the limitations around sexuality from a non-normative perspective, how do we exclude normative people who might develop themselves in new directions if they had the chance? What do normative men stand to gain by thinking outside the box about masculinity and sexuality?

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Questions I Want To Ask Entitled Cis Het Men, Part 2: Men's Rights

In the 2006 documentary "Boy I Am", a trans man talks about how one of his mental barriers to transitioning was the fact that after transition, he would be a "white male." And, he laughs, the "last thing in the world" he wanted to be was a white male!

A year or two ago, I attended a lecture by Jackson Katz, a rather overtly masculine, cis

male anti-abuse educator who lectures in colleges around the country. Bullet-headed and aggressive in stance, he said a lot of valuable things -- particularly about how men ought to take ownership of problems we traditionally consider "women's issues." It's certainly true that if we want to end male abuse of women, men must participate in the movement. But although Katz discussed some issues of masculinity, I heard little about how we can make things better for men. His proposition of a men's movement was centered around correcting the things some men are doing wrong.

Although they're often watered down, many feminist concepts have gone mainstream. For instance, Americans have some consciousness of traditional feminist critiques about how women's bodies are represented in the media. Indeed, that consciousness has become so endemic that, in a grandly ironic twist, marketers now capitalize on it to sell beauty products: the nationwide Dove Campaign for Real Beauty attempts to **use deconstruction of the media's representation of women** to sell Dove soap. Americans are also quite aware of men as the privileged class -- sometimes regarded outright as the oppressors.

But this shift in awareness about gender issues faced by women has not been accompanied by a widespread understanding of gender issues faced by men. And that creates situations like an activist working towards a masculinity movement that talks mainly about how men are hurting women, or a trans man who has trouble with the idea of transitioning partly because he doesn't want to be a white man -- one of the oppressors.

How can awareness of oppressive dynamics make it difficult for men to own their masculinity? Does male privilege ever make life harder for men? When does male privilege blind us to oppression of masculinity? There's some mainstream awareness of gender issues faced by women; is there any similar awareness of the problems of masculinity?

A good friend of mine first caught my attention by talking about gender. We encountered each other at a BDSM meetup, and when I mentioned that I'd been thinking about the boxes around masculine sexuality, he launched into a rant about oppressive sexual dynamics. He gave me references to complex sexuality blogs and intelligently used words like "heteronormative" and "patriarchy." But a month or so after we started talking, I mentioned his interest in gender issues... and he gave me a puzzled look. "I'm not really into gender studies," he said.

He talks about sex, gender and culture all the time -- but he also specifically identifies as highly masculine, and felt that to be at odds with identifying as someone who questions masculinity. As Thomas Millar writes in his aforementioned article: "There's a huge unstated assumption that to even address the question [of male sexuality], for men, is to mark one's self as 'other.' ... cis het men are brought up to fear that their masculinity could ever be called into question. By even opening up a dialog, I think some folks fear that they are conceding that their sexuality is not uncontroversial."

Men currently experience this problem in a way that women do not. In other words, women don't risk being seen as unfeminine as easily as men risk being seen as unmasculine; nor do we have quite the same fears about it. In 2008, a group of researchers published a paper called "Precarious Manhood." Their concluding statement:

"Our findings suggest that [so-called] real men experience their gender as a tenuous status that they may at any time lose and about which they readily experience anxiety and threat." Earlier in the paper, they wrote that -- although "our focus on manhood does not deny the importance of women's gender-related struggles" -- "Women who do not live up to cultural standards of femininity may be punished, rejected, or viewed as 'unladylike,' but rarely will their very status as women be questioned in the same way as men's status often is."

When is it to a man's disadvantage to publicly examine and question masculinity? Surely the mere act of questioning and examining gender does not make a man less masculine; how can we work against the perception that it does?

At the same time, though, this isn't a "with us or against us" situation: men who don't choose to identify as non-normative also don't tend to join the "opposition." By "opposition" I mean folks like "Men's Rights Activists" (on the Internet we call them MRAs). MRAs -- at least according to my stereotype of them -- are conscious of social and legal disadvantages suffered by men, such as the fact that men are at a severe disadvantage in child custody cases; at the same time, they're blind to male privilege. It's a deadly combination. My personal favorite MRA quotation ever is, "White men are the most discriminated-against group in the country." Mercifully, MRAs are a fringe group, but they make a big impression.

My "not into gender studies" friend once told me that although he frequently deconstructs problems of masculinity in the privacy of his own mind, he doesn't like to publicly have those conversations because he doesn't want to sound like an MRA. He said, "A lot of the time, men who want to think seriously about masculinity won't talk about it aloud because we really don't want to be **that**." He later added, "It's very tricky to discuss masculinity yet avoid simply devolving into male entitlement. That's the crux of the problem with the 'Men's Movement' assholes -- none of them are addressing the underlying problems of masculinity. They're just whining about not receiving the privileges their cultural conditioning tells them to expect."

How do the current "men's rights movements" discourage men who might, in a different climate, be very interested in discussing masculinity? Assuming men can reclaim the "pro-masculinity movement" from MRAs, do any men feel motivated to do so? Can men occupy the middle ground between MRAs and LGBTQ, feminist, or other leftist discussions of gender -- that is, can men find space to discuss masculinity without being aligned with "one side or the other"?

All too frequently in radical sex/gender circles, the theme has been blame. Men in particular are excoriated for failing to adequately support feminism -- or criticized for failing to join the fight against oppressive sex and gender norms -- but few ideas are offered for how men can be supportive and non-oppressive **while remaining overtly masculine**, especially if their sexuality is normative (e.g., straight/dominant/big-dicked).

There are fragments: some insight might be drawn from the ways in which many BDSM communities create non-oppressive frameworks within which we have our deliciously oppressive sex. With practice, one can get shockingly good at preserving a heavy dominant/submissive dynamic that still allows both partners to talk about their other

needs. Surely that understanding of sexual roles vs. other needs could be adapted to the service of gender identity. Yet so many BDSMers still fall prey to the same old gendered preconceptions, and talk nonsense about how "all women are naturally submissive" or whatever.

Don't get me wrong: of course anyone would deserve plenty of blame if they refused to let go of their entitlement, or chose not to examine the ways their behavior might support an oppressive system. But I think men exist who are willing to do those things, yet feel blocked from relevant discussions because participating creates anxiety about their sexual or gender identity. It strikes me as unreasonable to attack them for that. Choosing to present one's sexuality and/or gender identity in a normative way is not **in itself** a sin. It's not fair to expect people to fit themselves into a box that doesn't suit them -- not even for The All-Important Cause of better understanding sex and gender.

Where can we find ideas for how men can be both supportive and non-oppressive, and overtly masculine? How can we make it to normative men's advantage to analyze masculine norms? What does it look like to be masculine, but liberated from the strictures of stereotypical masculinity? How can we contribute to a Men's Movement that encompasses all three bases -- being perceived as masculine, acknowledging male privilege, and deconstructing the problems of masculinity?

* * *

Questions I Want To Ask Entitled Cis Het Men, Part 3: Space for Men

I'm about to assert something that makes me nervous, because I worry that people are going to stick me in the "asshole MRA" box. Don't get me wrong: I **certainly** don't think that women have it better, overall, than men do. But I do wonder whether it might be good for feminists to acknowledge that -- **although we don't experience nearly as much privilege as men** -- there are a lot of advantages women experience that men don't.

Because women aren't seen as threatening, we have an easier time doing confrontational things like approaching strangers on the street. Because women aren't seen as fighters, we stand a lower chance of being mugged than men do. Because women are seen as emotional, we're given a huge amount of social space to consider and discuss our feelings. I can work with and be affectionate with children far more easily than a man could. I can be explicit and overt about my sexuality without being viewed as a creep.

And there are at least a few recurring complaints about how trying to be masculine can suck. First and foremost: that men don't feel they've been taught to process their emotions, or don't feel allowed to display them. Another: that they're perceived as less manly if they don't achieve success through a career, especially if they aren't the main breadwinner for their family. A third: that men are expected to be sexually insatiable, or always to be sexually available.

Of course, it's worth noting that the advantages women experience are almost always the flip side of unfortunate stereotypes. For instance, one might say that women get more social space for emotion because we're stereotyped as irrational and hysterical. But that doesn't change the fact that most of us easily grasp that space, while most men don't. And if we can reject the Oppression Olympics for just one minute and stop thinking about

who's got it worse, it becomes clear that the advantages and drawbacks associated with being both male and female are intertwined. The two systems reinforce, and cannot function without, each other. The gender binary may not hurt everyone **equally**, but it hurts everyone. As those beautiful "Every Girl / Every Boy" posters say, the most obvious example is: "For every girl who is tired of acting weak when she is strong, there is a boy tired of appearing strong when he feels vulnerable."

I do suspect that it may not be psychologically realistic to ask people from our underdog-loving culture to embrace an image of themselves as privileged; my thoughts turn again to the trans man who hated the thought of being a white male. But if we feminists can't work productively from a stance that acknowledges our social advantages, how can we expect straight/dominant/big-dicked men to do it?

Could feminist acknowledgment of the women's gender-based advantages help pave the way for more men to acknowledge male privilege? Could feminist acknowledgment of the advantages on both sides of the gender binary help us better grasp what sucks about being a guy?

Am I citing Thomas MacAulay Millar too much here? Well, at least once, he frustrated me. Amongst the comments on one blog post, I thought he was stating his views about stereotypical guys rather harshly. I suggested that it might be better to seek common ground, or at least to explain things gently; he said he wasn't interested -- "I think we all work with some people where they are and can't soft-sell our views enough to deal with others." He added, "If I'm going to alienate someone for saying what I think too bluntly, I'll pick entitled cis het dudes."

I won't pretend I didn't laugh when I read that -- but I worried about it, too. I've had an enormous number of experiences trying to discuss feminism/sex/gender with men in which the men tensed, bristled, and closed me out. I don't think it was always because those guys couldn't stand the thought of losing their privilege, either. I think a lot of dudes have been led to feel that they have no place in gender discussions -- that those discussions will always be about what men are doing wrong, and that no one's prepared to work with them where they are.

All groups have outsiders. Movements inevitably form themselves around oppositional forces. As someone who's spent her share of time feeling feminist rage, I'd say that being filled with feminist rage is totally understandable. And seriously, don't get me wrong: I'm not giving unfeminist guys a free pass. I'm not happy about the fact that so many men are apparently alienated from feminism because us radicals are too confrontational -- or too uncomfortably correct -- for their fragile masculine egos to handle. (I'm being sarcastic! Mostly.) I'm **really** not happy about the fact that I've got to think about **marketing** anti-oppression -- in a just universe, wouldn't anti-oppression market itself?

But at the same time, I'm a realist. I know this isn't a just universe, and I want to use tactics that'll achieve my goals. Which are: I'd really like to find more men at my side in the sex and gender wars. I'd really like to talk to more guys who don't see ideas stamped with feminism as an attack -- rather, as an opportunity for alliance. Plus, if we're going to think in terms of cold hard tactics, it's worth noting that normative men hold most of the power in America. (That's part of what we're complaining about, right?) So swelling our

ranks with The Oppressive Class means we can ruthlessly use their power for good.

Can we do better at making feminist discourses around gender and sexuality open to normative men, without driving ourselves crazy? How can we make our movement open to, and accepting of, normative men? Put another way, how do we convince normative men to support us?

Maybe we don't need a lot of normative men in the camp of sex and gender radicals; maybe we'll be happier without silly Gender Studies 101 questions clotting our discussions. Still, even if we don't try to "recruit" them, I'd love to see more widespread analysis of masculinity and masculine sexuality amongst normative dudes... if only because getting a sense for their societal boxes might simply make them happier. If only because I think they've got their own liberation to strive for.

So at the very least, I'd like to contribute to an America where serious examination of masculinity and male sexuality can flourish.

That's my final question. *How do I do it?*

* * *

The above entries originally appeared at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2009/10/18/questions-i-want-to-ask-entitled-cis-het-men-part-1/

and

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2009/10/20/questions-i-want-to-ask-entitled-cis-het-men-part-2-mens-rights/

and

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2009/10/24/questions-i-want-to-ask-entitled-cis-het-men-part-3-space-for-men/

The first followup (plus many many comments) is available at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2009/12/09/manliness-and-feminism-the-followup/

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EDUCATION:

[theory] Sexual ABCs in Africa, Part 1: Abstinence

In 2009-2010, I spent a year in sub-Saharan Africa working on HIV mitigation. It was fascinating, frustrating, heartbreaking work. I learned an enormous amount about the possibilities and pitfalls of foreign aid, public health, and global injustice -- far more than I could ever summarize in an introductory paragraph. Maybe someday I'll write

more about it all, but in the meantime, if my articles leave you with an appetite for more, then I recommend two wrenching books: Letting Them Die: Why HIV/AIDS Prevention Programmes Fail *by Catherine Campbell, and* The Wisdom of Whores: Bureaucrats, Brothels and the Business of AIDS *by Elizabeth Pisani. (Pisani's book in particular gave me so many moments of recognition that I was almost offended. I was like, dammit, Elizabeth Pisani, this is the book I wanted to write!)*

In early 2010, while I was still in Africa, I began writing a series of articles about my experiences. These articles were published at CarnalNation.com and edited by Chris Hall, who is a smart sex-positive writer in his own right. I'm especially grateful to Chris because, unlike a lot of editors, he made the effort to grasp where I was coming from; he always made requests rather than demands, and never changed my work without consulting me. Good editors are hard to come by, and I hope that when I edit other writers' work today, I do credit to the model Chris provided.

I'm sad to report that CarnalNation ceased publishing new articles in late 2010, although you can still read the archives online (and I encourage you to do so). There are a lot of "sex-positive" websites out there that have little real understanding of sex communities, activism, etc. -- not to mention, there are websites that hire talented and ethical writers, but then hide truly unethical business practices. But from what I could tell, CarnalNation was the real deal. The list of contributors read like a Sex-Positive All-Stars, and I was proud to be part of it.

So, anyway. This is the first of a bunch of articles that I originally wrote about sex and culture in southern Africa. Like all my writing, it's framed within my own experience. (I'm not republishing all the Africa articles in this book, but they're all available in my CarnalNation archive.) And before we get into it, I would like to note one final thing. One problem with how many Westerners write about Africa is that they treat Africa as "one country": there's little acknowledgment that Africa is a huge, diverse continent full of many different cultures. I try to avoid that, but I also write under a pseudonym, and thus I can't write too precisely about where I was or what I did in Africa. I'm sorry about that, and I hope I don't come off as too much of a colonialist asshole.

* * *

Sexual ABCs in Africa, Part 1: Abstinence

In the beginning of 2009, I made a name for myself as a sex-positive, pro-BDSM educator in Chicago -- and no one was more surprised than me by how suddenly successful I was! I curated the explosive pro-sex, pro-queer, pro-kink documentary film series Sex+++ at Jane Addams Hull-House Museum. I lectured on both BDSM and sexual communication in Chicago, San Francisco and New York. I even fielded a call from Oprah's office! Then, just as my life was going all crazy, I was offered a job doing HIV/AIDS mitigation in southern Africa. I've wanted to do it for years, so I accepted -- though not without some soul-searching.

Rather a change of pace, right? I thought I might even give up basic romance by coming here... but not so fast. Only a month after moving, I met a guy I really liked. He's another American, also here to work on HIV/AIDS; we live a bit far apart, but flirted constantly

by text message. We discussed etymology, traded literary recommendations, compared religion -- I'm Unitarian, he's a Baha'i convert. He lived one summer in Chicago, and we discovered that we'd shopped at the same bookstores.

One night, we found ourselves in the same nightclub. Using a cigarette as an excuse to go outside, we abandoned the music and talked for hours. Our friends came to check on us multiple times, with varying degrees of smirking insinuation; we kept promising to go back in after one cigarette, then neglecting to actually smoke it. The conversation went through homesickness, ethics, roleplaying games, more literature. I lent him a book. He promised to visit me.

His next text message, a few days later, was plainly nervous. Can you imagine someone blurting a text message? That's what he did when he told me that he takes the "no sex before marriage" part of his Baha'i faith seriously. I was stunned -- but I had to laugh, too. **Of course** Miss Clarisse Thorn, pro-sex advocate, just had to fixate on a man who wouldn't sleep with her!

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I did not undergo abstinence-only sex education. My middle school's health teachers were admirably forthright and even hosted condom demonstrations in the auditorium, more power to 'em. I also had the good fortune to be raised Unitarian -- so I received incredibly compassionate, complete sex education in Sunday School.

Still, for a long time I was strongly attracted to chastity. In my teens, I decided that I wouldn't lose my virginity until I was much older -- I think I picked age 25 -- because I wanted to be sure I'd be mature enough to handle it. This resolution didn't last, but after I became sexually active, I occasionally came back to the idea. A few female friends took "time off" -- in some cases, full years of abstinence. I considered doing so myself, strongly and for a long time.

Back then, I was terrible at communicating about sex. Reading explicit sex scenes made me feel anxious, perhaps because I felt they set standards I couldn't "perform." Talking explicitly to my partners felt impossible, not least because I had practically no idea what I wanted. Worst of all, I could feel the societal boxes around my sexuality, but I couldn't articulate them. Plus, there were dark undercurrents to my sexuality that simply scared me. Abstinence was the only obvious way around my sex-negative cultural baggage!

Once I adjusted into my BDSM orientation, once I got a grip on how to circumvent some problems with how Americans tend to think about sex, once I experienced mutual sexual communication that was totally trusting and adventurous... my attraction to chastity was greatly reduced. These days, the idea only seems awesome when (a) I've just been romantically burned, or (b) I want more time to myself.

It's tempting to think that Mr. Chastity might be the same way: that he's uncomfortable for similar reasons; that he'll "get over it." Tempting -- and offensively presumptuous. Maybe he'll re-examine his motives someday, and maybe he won't. The important thing is to respect his feelings. So when he sent me that text, I did what any responsible sex-positive girl ought to do: I honored his boundaries and thought seriously about whether I could work within them.

I wrote back:

I think it's adorable that you told me the vow thing by text- & on a serious note, I rather admire you for challenging yourself & social expectations of masculinity. I can't afford exegesis of my sexual history by text; we can talk about it when you visit- which I hope you do, even if you insist on sleeping on the floor. I promise not to push you- though I confess I'm curious about the vow's limits. But I also understand if you don't feel comfortable coming down.

His relief, in our next few exchanges, was palpable. I think a man who wants to abstain has a far trickier journey ahead of him than a woman: America's sexual assumptions may be formed around stereotypical male sexuality -- which **really sucks** for women -- but it's a very narrow stereotype that limits men too. Men are expected to be insatiable, and preferring not to have sex casts a man's entire masculinity into question. His abstinence can cause anxiety for the female partner, too: after all, given an assumption that men are nigh-indiscriminate sex machines, a woman might feel that there's something terribly wrong with her if a man won't bang her.

Mr. Chastity has dealt with those problems a lot, so my careful reaction and evident lack of anxiety won me lots of points. Since then, I've met up with him publicly twice, and we've even managed to make out! He's still going to visit. Maybe I can convince him to sleep in bed, as long as I promise not to put the moves on him.

And maybe, just maybe, his vow allows him to practice BDSM... a girl can dream, right? But seriously, if we can do BDSM together, then I just might be his dream partner. I'd be happy to focus our sexual time on BDSM and foreplay, and to ignore "actual" sex indefinitely. Plus, some people argue that declining to sate ourselves sexually is the best tactic for prolonging romantic magic. So this could be the way for Mr. Chastity to become the love of my life.

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In Africa, the mantra for HIV educators is ABC: the three things that protect against HIV/AIDS are Abstinence, Being faithful, and Condom usage. But my job is much more complicated than passing out condoms and wagging my finger. The problem isn't so much that people don't know how to avoid HIV, although myths and misconceptions do exist. The problem is that people don't seem willing to change their behavior in order to protect themselves... or that they don't feel they have the power to change their behavior.

People can't just know about condoms -- they must prioritize condom usage despite drawbacks like loss of pleasure or pressure from their partners. People can't just know that HIV is sexually transmitted -- they must be psychologically open to abstaining from sex despite drawbacks that are, well, obvious. HIV prevention in Africa is less about sharing knowledge, now, and more about marketing: giving people a new perspective on sex, their health, and their futures.

Of course, I'm totally psyched about marketing some of these social aspects, like gender equality. (Gender equality is an HIV/AIDS issue for lots of reasons -- the most obvious being that the less power women have, the less they control their own sexual acts.) But others give me pause. Abstinence? Seriously? It sticks in my craw. Obviously, I don't

have a problem with people **choosing** not to have sex... but I'm not sure how I feel about actively **convincing** people not to have sex.

In America, I advocate for open, explicit, pleasure-affirming sex education. But that's a radical stance even in America -- I'm not sure whether it's possible here! At least I'm spotting a few allies, some in unexpected places: for instance, there's a great high-profile, outspoken sex-positive educator named Agrippa Khathide in South Africa... who happens to be a pastor. I'm starting to think there's room to do fascinating work here, creating culturally appropriate sex-positive education.

Yet abstinence remains the only 100% effective tactic for avoiding HIV. As another educator told me, "I **hate** abstinence-only education more than anything. Seriously. But... here, I think it's a necessary ingredient." Is it responsible for me to avoid promoting abstinence? Even if marketing abstinence means that to some extent, I'll have to tell people sexual exploration isn't worth doing?

I'm still feeling out my approach, but... what if the most effective way to fight HIV is to align myself with values antithetical to free sexuality? Does properly doing my job require me to **promote a sex-negative agenda?** Surely not. Surely there are ways to promote sex-positive abstinence -- perhaps a "Vibrators for African Women" program...? (This is a joke. Mostly.)

And that's just one facet of the broader question keeping me awake at night! Which is: given a fatal, incurable sexually transmitted infection; given a population where, in some groups, up to 40% test positive; given a society in which culturally appropriate messages emphatically do not include my pro-sex, pro-queer, pro-kink approach to sex education... what does being a sex-positive educator **mean**?

Maybe I can harvest clues from my own feelings, past and present, about abstinence: clues for how to promote it compassionately, effectively and responsibly; clues for locating my boundaries when I talk about it. And maybe I can harvest down-to-earth advice from my relationship with Mr. Chastity, too. I can work from toxic masculine norms he's had such trouble with, and examine how men in southern Africa might likewise worry about abstinence -- if you think American men have tough definitions of sexual manliness to contend with, then try living in a place where the big men have multiple wives and over a dozen children. I also think it'll be hot to be bound against going "too far." Maybe I can learn how abstinence is fun, fun, **fun**!

Hey, at the very least, it'll give me a taste of what I'm telling everyone else to do.

* * *

The original version of this article can be found on the Internet, but please note that I've done some editing for clarity. Here's the original:

http://carnalnation.com/content/45211/1133/sexual-abcs-africa-part-1-abstinence

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EDUCATION:

[theory] Sexual ABCs in Africa, Part 2: Be Faithful

This is the second in the three-part "Sexual ABCs" series, but I originally intended it to be the last one, because it's the most complicated by far.

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Sexual ABCs in Africa, Part 2: Be Faithful

South African President Jacob Zuma has three wives; in a headline-making ceremony, a South African businessman recently married four women at once. King Mswati of Swaziland has thirteen wives, and his father King Sobhuza had 70. (Yes. Seventy.) Here in southern Africa, even those rich men who don't take multiple wives almost always support mistresses. Naturally, local women don't get multiple spouses, and the social penalties for infidelity are much worse for women. In America, feminists often point out that "slut" is an insult while "stud" is a compliment; there's a similar linguistic trend in siZulu, but the English words are mild compared to their siZulu equivalents.

* * *

I rarely practice consensual non-monogamy myself, but I don't hesitate to advocate destigmatizing polyamory and swing in America. True, my primary interest is BDSM, but there's so much to learn from every form of consensual sexuality. Plus, we're basically on the same side -- it'd be great if different sex subcultures had more consciousness of a sex-positive "agenda" or "movement"! Although our communities have different emphases and, sometimes, profoundly different values, I see swingers and polyfolk as my brothers- and sisters-in-arms.

But enough of the soapbox! The point is that I've often defended poly -- and I've gotten into interesting arguments doing so. One friend noted just how hard it is for poly people to negotiate their relationships. "It's so **complicated**," he complained. "So much communication is required. Doesn't that seem like an argument against it? If polyamory were really a good relationship model, then people wouldn't have to put so much effort into accomplishing it."

"It's only complicated because polyamory isn't our societal default," I replied. "People have to put extra effort into negotiating relationships that fall outside the norm. The same thing happens with BDSM. Kinksters **must** spend a lot more time discussing our sexual relationships, because it's more dangerous for us to make assumptions about where our partners want to go. That doesn't mean there's anything wrong with kink.

"And," I added, "that extra effort can be a feature, not a bug! The fact that kinksters spend so much time isolating different aspects of our sexuality has given us a uniquely fine-grained sexual vocabulary. I think most kinksters tend to make fewer assumptions about our partners' boundaries than vanilla people do. And circumstances have forced us to develop some brilliant strategies for bedroom communication. I'm not saying we're all brilliant communicators, but I think we've got a unique window on it. When I run sexual communication workshops, half the tactics I share are filched from the BDSM

subculture; I just rename them for a general audience. Many polyfolk have similar insights about relationship communication."

Being in southern Africa, seeing all these men partnered with multiple women, has brought that conversation to mind. Because the majority of men can't afford multiple wives and some churches frown on the practice, polygyny isn't exactly the default -- but it's certainly a well-respected, highly desirable relationship formation. (Polygyny is the most precise term for the type of polygamy that's practiced here, where men can have multiple wives but women can't have multiple husbands. However, a lot of Africans simply call it "polygamy.")

And men who can't go the open route frequently do the same thing discreetly. In the July 2009 issue of *New African Magazine,* Akua Djanie -- who moved to England at age 10 and grew up there -- observes: "I know very few African men, especially those living on the continent, who keep only one partner. The majority of men I come across are in multiple relationships, sometimes open, but most times on the quiet." She also notes that "in some instances, a man's manhood is judged by the number of women he can keep."

So monogamy is not the default; and negotiating monogamy is difficult, here. But a new factor makes it a matter of life and death: HIV.

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The basic centerpiece of HIV prevention is ABC -- Abstinence, Being faithful, and using Condoms. But the three strategies haven't always received equal airtime. "The Fidelity Fix," a 2004 *New York Times Magazine* article by Helen Epstein, quoted one analyst who believed "partner reduction has been the neglected middle child of the ABC approach." Epstein wrote, "Perhaps the topic seems weighted with moral judgment; perhaps Western advisors in particular feel it would be insensitive to raise it; perhaps they also feel it would be futile to try to change deeply rooted patterns of behavior." She outlined those patterns and concluded, "A fidelity campaign does seem worth a try, even if it might seem overly simplistic and preachy." Another expert, quoted in a 2007 *Washington Post* piece on multiple partners in Botswana, agreed: "There has never been equal emphasis on 'Don't have many partners'.... If you just say, 'Use the condom'... we will never see the daylight of the virus leaving us."

Living in southern Africa now, it seems clear that this recommendation has been taken to heart. I regularly spot posters, stickers and billboards for fidelity campaigns that apparently didn't exist a few years ago. Although cultural pride is a big deal here, locals routinely disparage risky marriage-related cultural practices: for instance, many speak harshly against wife inheritance, whereby a woman whose husband has died is traditionally expected to marry his brother. Many such practices are becoming more and more unusual. However, the larger phenomenon of polygyny seems harder to budge.

I recently sat in on a partner reduction dialogue for one town's church leaders; it was attended by representatives both from churches that allow polygamous marriages, and those that don't. The discussion was quite civil, though one anti-polygamy preacher did make snide comments towards the polygamists. They talked about issues like an absence of marriage counseling, preachers' failure to act as positive role models, and churches'

failure to be transparent about HIV. (The all-male group also noted "women's selfish impatience with erectile dysfunction," "women preferring men who last longer," "women preferring men with a lot of money," and "women not loving their husbands enough" as contributing factors to fidelity failure.) The group seemed pleased to work together, and eager to address the problem. The question of members being pro- or anti-polygamy was, apparently, only a side note.

As it happens, there are plenty of polygamy problems that have nothing to do with HIV/AIDS. These divisions would exist without the disease. For instance, some preachers who don't support polygamy will sanction divorce and remarriage. One man told me that "true" polygamous marriage -- in which a man has many wives, all supported simultaneously -- is slowly being replaced: rich men now often take younger wives, but divorce and cast aside the previous wives first. The "new" approach looks suspiciously like the Western model of "serial monogamy"... except that the women, left with few resources, rarely marry again. (The gender inequality is highlighted when only one partner has HIV: an HIV-positive man will likely be nursed by his wife, while HIV-positive women can fear anything from abuse to abandonment.) Partly because abandonment is getting so common and partly due to doctrinal interpretations, there is yet a third group of church leaders who not only reject polygamy but refuse to remarry divorced people.

Most interestingly, I've noticed that from some perspectives, the current system appears to stack the moral deck in favor of polygyny. A lot of the time, people will claim that there are only three alternatives: (1) abandonment and/or deadbeat fatherhood, (2) cheating, or (3) overt polygyny. If those are the alternatives, then even empowered women will argue in favor of polygyny -- though not happily, since they're quite conscious that a system supporting polygamy without polyandry is completely unfair.

For example, in the aforementioned July 2009 *New African* piece, titled "The Sins of Our Fathers," Akua Djanie reflects bitterly upon a father who ignored her mother in favor of his second wife. She writes that she "will encourage [her sons] to have a relationship with only one woman at a time. And if they make the mistake of having children from different women, I will make sure they are responsible for each and every one of them." Then, however, she asserts that "although I myself would never wish to be in such a [polygamous] relationship, I think it can work, does work, and has worked in the past"; that "the issue is not so much with the pros and cons of polygamy, but more with the irresponsible behavior of some men"; and that "African men are still as polygamous as they were in my father's heyday. In fact I believe that polygamy will never go away." Djanie doesn't mention HIV once.

(It's worth noting that Djanie is very aware of Western cultural imperialism; she loathes and deconstructs those who downgrade African culture in favor of Western. For instance, her November 2009 *New African* piece was about how frustrating it is that Africans usually model Christmas on Western standards, showing images of white children frolicking in Alpine snow. Thus, her argument against polygamy is especially striking.)

Recently, I spoke to some grassroots HIV educators who go door-to-door in their rural villages. They keep a list of different prevention tactics that they discuss with their neighbors. Glancing through, I saw both *Zero Grazing* and *Be Faithful* side-by-side. "I

don't understand the difference between these two," I said, prompting the educators to confer amongst themselves in siZulu. Finally, one offered, "Be Faithful is about monogamy with one partner. Zero Grazing is about having multiple wives and not going outside the marriage." The others seemed to agree. Given their limited English and my limited siZulu, I decided not to ask: "Does promoting both strike you as a mixed message?" (I did ask whether they think people listen to their advice. In response, they just looked depressed.)

Clearly, the fidelity fix has arrived. What's harder to determine is how much, and in what manner, the message is being emphasized -- not to mention, whether it's actually taking root.

* * *

Given my experience with polyamory, and my nigh-rabid promotion of straightforward communication as the Cure For All Ills, I can't help wondering: would it help to port communication tactics from our polyamorous allies over to southern Africa? But polyamory is fundamentally different from polygyny. Polyamory assumes that both partners have equal footing -- equal negotiating status -- whereas polygyny assumes that men are entitled to privileges women aren't. Would it be possible to take the lessons of even-handed polyamory, and apply them to polygyny?

What if I choose not to address polygyny -- to avoid the whole culturally fraught debate, and just create relationship communication workshops inspired by polyamorous (and BDSM) analysis? (That way, with no one alienated by an overt stance, I may reach the audience better anyway.) Will it work if I teach from a perspective of assumed gender equality? My instinct is "yes"; I've even found a heartening example! The well-known South African Pastor Agrippa Khathide preaches equality for women and sexual pleasure for everyone (as long as they're married first, of course). He gives explicit sermons including technical sexual advice, and has been quoted in interviews asserting things like: "married people should be totally free to express themselves any way they wish in the bedroom," that "they must be willing to experiment, explore and explicitly acknowledge the giving and receiving of pleasure," and that women are entitled to "enjoyment of sex like men."

If he can do that, surely I can do something similar! Surely, then, my inherent egalitarian assumptions would make a positive impact, even if I say nothing direct about irritating male entitlement. Yet I worry that if I focus on relationship communication and don't directly take on the monogamy juggernaut, I will sidestep the heart of these debates. Indeed, not only might I be sidestepping -- I might be turning my gaze from the very place I ought to focus.

* * *

Perhaps the hardest part about wrapping my head around a fidelity campaign isn't whether certain tactics are appropriate or inappropriate, effective or ineffective. It's that they can be both, or neither -- and while culture matters, it varies by individual. More to the point, while culture affects attitudes towards Abstinence and Condoms, there aren't many ways to interpret the **implementation** of those two dicta.

The people who live here **themselves** are divided about what fidelity means. Be Faithful, or Zero Grazing? Multiple wives, or divorce and remarriage? **They themselves** are working towards gender equality, but have just as many arguments about its implementation as Westerners do. **They themselves** are proud of their culture, and yet there's one anti-HIV slogan that always leaps out at me when I spot it among the myriad of posters and stickers:

There is nothing cultural about dying of AIDS.

* * *

The original version of this article can be found on the Internet, but please note that I've done some editing for clarity. Here's the original:

http://carnalnation.com/content/45680/1133/sexual-abcs-africa-part-2-be-faithful

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EDUCATION:

[theory] Sexual ABCs in Africa, Part 3: Condoms

This article followed the previous two articles, published at CarnalNation.com in January 2010. I think a lot of people would like to believe that Africans are "different from us" and that's why HIV has had such an impact in Africa. And it's accurate to say that certain cultural patterns influence the spread of HIV, as I described in the previous piece, "Be Faithful."

But the truth is, also, that people are similar everywhere: we respond to certain incentives, and sexuality is one of our most powerful incentives. The terrifying truth is that Africans are not especially different from us... and given the right circumstances, the West can and will be equally vulnerable to this awful epidemic. And as I learned more and then came home, I began to see just how vulnerable we are. There are poor, marginalized areas of the USA where HIV is reaching the same proportions that it has reached in Africa. And even among privileged young Americans, HIV rates have been rising for the first time in years.

* * *

Sexual ABCs in Africa, Part 3: Condoms

In America, the common argument against explicit sex education -- and promoting condom use in schools -- is that it will encourage kids to be promiscuous. The idea is that if we portray it as normal for kids to be having sex and tell them how to do it safely, they'll be more likely to go and have sex. As for the kids who'll have sex anyway... well, they're sinning and don't deserve to know what they're doing.

Some things don't change, even across oceans. I occasionally hear the same arguments against promoting condom use in southern Africa. But here, HIV is ripping the populace

to pieces, and it's much harder to speak against condoms when funeral processions wind through your neighborhood every weekend. Occasional religious educators claim that promoting condom usage waters down their message and therefore makes anti-HIV education less **effective;** but most churches I've encountered take a pragmatic, condom-promoting approach. Indeed, one of the best HIV curricula I've seen so far is the "Channels of Hope" workshop, created by the Christian organization World Vision and designed to train church groups. It not only promotes explicit condom education, but urges compassion towards sex workers and homosexuals. **And** it discusses why marital rape isn't okay! I'd venture to say that the majority of liberal, secular sex education curricula in the USA aren't as awesome.

Just the other day, I was surveying a bunch of kids aged 11-13 and they asked how to put on a condom. Cursing myself silently, I had to admit that I didn't have any to show them... at which point one child dashed from the room and returned minutes later bearing both a condom, plus a rather splintery stick from a firewood pile. Condom distribution is in full swing; I can think of three places to pick up free condoms within a ten-minute walk from where I'm seated. Condoms are described in kids' textbooks, and condom demonstrations are welcome in every school. Condoms are lauded by politicians, pop icons, and religious leaders. Take any person off the street and they'll know the HIV-prevention mantra: ABC -- Abstain, Be faithful, use Condoms. Yet condom usage rates are still killingly low.

* * *

Though I'm fishbelly-pale, I'm not great at wearing sunscreen, and I live in **Africa**. I try... I mean, I kinda try... I mean it's so annoying to apply, and it feels gross! And this notwithstanding the fact that I literally have ten bottles of top-quality, non-sticky, oil-free sunscreen sitting across the room from me as I type this. On the other hand, I religiously take my malaria prophylactic pill; I've noticed no side effects, and getting malaria would **really suck**.

I recall one recurring conversation between myself and a former boyfriend, whom I dated for years. We'd both had excellent sex education, and yet we used withdrawal as our primary birth-control method. We did it even though we both had boxes of condoms available. We did it even though neither of us wanted me to get pregnant, and -- though I'm definitely pro-choice -- I wasn't sure I could bring myself to have an abortion. We'd both been tested, and we trusted each other not to cheat, but that's some dangerous trust to extend -- and **we knew it**.

One particular moment comes to mind: we were lying lazily in bed together, talking about how stupid we were.

"We should be more careful," he said seriously.

"We really should," I agreed.

"Let's be more careful," he suggested.

I nodded.

We weren't.

Were we stupid? Obviously. Were we normal? Unfortunately, yes. A few months ago, I chatted with another American HIV educator about the situation here in Africa. "They know to use condoms," she complained, "and they have the condoms! I just don't **get** it!"

"I agree that it's incomprehensible," I said, "but hey, **I** haven't always been 100% careful, and I'm a sex educator."

She glanced at me, then away. "Yeah, I haven't either," she admitted. There was a gloomy pause, and then we couldn't help it -- we cracked up. "I hate love," she said when the giggles subsided. She shook her head. "That shit fucks with you."

Why didn't I use condoms with that ex? I **still** don't know! When you instruct people to use condoms as often as I do, you get accustomed to the arguments. I hear the same reasons we didn't use condoms -- because they don't feel as good, because they interrupt the moment, etc. etc. etc. -- I hear them, I smile and I tell the audience, "You gotta use 'em anyway, folks." I'm a hypocrite, but what else can I say?

And there are deeper-rooted objections to condoms -- objections that are both rarely stated in public, and harder to confront. One is trust, which I've been struggling with for a long time, since before I got to Africa. I don't think it's good for condom discussions to center on trust, and I wish I had more ideas about how to refocus them. "Use condoms because you can't trust anyone, not even your lover," is an ugly message to impart. Moreover, it only encourages the audience to view **not** using condoms as a gift, or a signifier of trust.

In America, I tend to cast it like this: "Safer sex is normal. It's the baseline. Lots of people practice it. It's an assumption. Act like it." Which, I hope, helps people simply default to safer sex without forcing direct questions about any given partner's integrity. Hopefully, it also distracts attention from seeing discarding condoms as a gift. But the truth is that condom usage isn't always an assumption even in America (witness myself and my ex). And it's less of an assumption here in Africa. How can I avoid validating the viewpoint that not using condoms is the best way to express trust?

The second deep-rooted objection -- again, both in Africa and America -- is inability to maintain an erection while using a condom. When I was younger, I used to think that guys were just whining when they claimed they couldn't keep it up with a condom, but in my old age I've determined that People Are Different (no way!): while most men deal with condoms just fine, some men genuinely can't. Since people tend to be bad at communicating about sex and especially bad at making space for conversations about non-normative male sexuality, this isn't often acknowledged. Fortunately, the solution is easy: men who have trouble with condomised penis-in-vagina sex gain a glorious opportunity to explore all the other kinds of sex!

People tend to panic when confronted with the idea of a man who can't have penetrative sex. But that's sex-negative nonsense based entirely on the stereotype of "real sex" as penis-in-vagina intercourse. The solution to loss of erection isn't to sit around awkwardly wishing you could be having penetrative sex. The solution is for both partners to start exploring with mouths, hands... and words. But teaching about this means speaking very explicitly, and it can be hard to have those conversations in a conservative society

without being run out of town.

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In the Strange Case of Clarisse and Her Condomless Ex, I was at least Being Faithful with a pre-tested partner, and I didn't live in an HIV-rich population. The risks were lower, and it's true that I've never run those kinds of risks outside a long-term monogamous relationship. But the bottom line remains: my ex and I did it even though we knew better.

He and I are both privileged people. Neither of us was dependent on the other for money, for instance. If two highly privileged people who agree that condoms are necessary can fail to use condoms, what about people who don't have that privilege?

In many places across the world, including much of southern Africa, sex workers can charge double for sex without a condom. No businesswoman is likely to insist on a measure that will halve her profits -- especially if she already lives on a razor-fine margin, and especially if she's already contracted HIV herself. Likewise, if a girl can't afford expensive school fees and therefore sleeps with her teachers, then she's hardly in a position to demand protection. Many married women quite justifiably fear divorce, violence or murder if they refuse their husbands sex without a condom -- in one recent case, a wife tested negative for HIV while her husband tested positive, but when she tried to refuse condomless sex, he killed her.

Some pro-condom campaigns tell the populace that "it's your responsibility: you must respect your body and take the initiative"; but while that works for some people, it's a terribly cruel message for people who lack the standing to negotiate with their partners.

Add to this the fact that, if you know enough people living with HIV -- and if your life already seems difficult and directionless -- the disease will start to seem like much less of a big deal. A friend reports that one day, sitting in a salon, she saw a man exit with a sex worker. "Don't forget a condom!" she called bluntly. His reply: "I'm not the first to get it, and I won't be the last." (Indeed, there are documented cases of marginal populations **deliberately contracting HIV** when they perceived benefits. For instance, when HIV-positive illegal immigrants in France were offered citizenship as part of a humanitarian initiative, some sought out the disease.)

People who ignore prophylactics will always be with us. Some of them will be like me and my ex, or the sex worker's client: despite knowing the risk, transient pleasure trumps absolute safety. There isn't much to be done about that demographic, save ensuring that they (we) truly grasp the consequences we risk with our silliness.

Some people, however, will be vulnerable more because they're female, or young, or poor. In those cases, addressing the root causes -- sexism, poverty, abuse -- becomes the only solution. Thus, some of the best HIV programs in southern Africa appear to address completely different issues. These include:

* Identifying and supporting income-generating projects for women, so that they have the resources to walk away from abusive partners;

* Sponsoring schools, so that they can educate for free and remove one reason a

schoolchild might sleep with a teacher;

* Facilitating support groups, so members can share tactics for negotiating safer sex (or, if already HIV-positive, help each other cope with obligations and treatment regimens);

* Creating strong communities, so people are quite simply more motivated to live.

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It's always tempting to see unfamiliar cultures as monolithic, but we must remind ourselves that they never are. Every society in the world contains its own divides, just like America's culture and subcultures. Because HIV/AIDS functions along the very taboo, very culturally-influenced axis of sexuality, it throws taboo cultural sexual divides into high relief.

In America, one thing the disease's advent served to highlight was stigma towards LGBTQ and other radical sexual subcultures. American HIV mitigation has often sought to redress that stigma. Here, one thing it serves to highlight -- one thing mitigation seeks to redress -- is mainstream gender and relationship issues. But these splits existed before HIV came along. Although the prevalence of HIV sheds light on and invokes compassion for these divisions, they're more enduring than we like to think.

Still, I can't help noticing the phoenixes arising from these ashes. Firstly, it turns out that the best way to shut down sex-negative arguments against explicit sex education is to invoke the specter of HIV. One 2008 report from a well-respected local organization argued that AIDS prevention efforts should include straightforward lessons on pleasurable acts, such as oral sex or sex toy usage! (Obviously, I hope to work with this organization.)

A 2004 *New York Times Magazine* article on HIV in southern Africa made the case that while "many experts contend that sexual-behavior change in Africa is complicated because women's fear of abusive partners inhibits private discussions of sex, condom use and HIV," the crisis also contributes to a better environment for those discussions. One researcher is quoted pointing out that, "young South Africans are much more likely to talk about sex and are developing 'a vocabulary for discussing feelings and desires.'" Furthermore, southern African movements for women's empowerment invariably cite HIV as a reason change is necessary **now.** Because gender oppression is acknowledged as a driver of the epidemic, gender equality is an explicit goal of both governments and major HIV organizations. Even admirably reasonable laws about sex work are being discussed -- considerably more reasonable than most Western sex work legislation. The laws probably won't pass, unfortunately, but at least they're on the radar.

I've got a twisted confession to make. On days when I feel particularly flippant, I find myself thinking: *Thank God for HIV/AIDS!* Without HIV... would women's empowerment be such a given? Aside from bleeding heart feminists like myself, who would care about sex workers' conditions? Aside from sex-positive nuts like myself, who would advocate for explicit sex education?

Here's hoping we can create better social conditions to arrest the pandemic... and keep those conditions going afterwards.

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The original version of this article can be found on the Internet, but please note that I've done some editing for clarity. Here's the original:

http://carnalnation.com/content/46266/1133/sexual-abcs-africa-part-3-condoms

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ACTIVISM:

[theory] Colonized Libidos

This article was published at CarnalNation.com in early 2010. Anti-oppression theory sure can get out of touch with reality.

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Colonized Libidos

The situation for gay / lesbian rights here in Africa has gotten lots of media attention lately, and I myself have written about meeting a Swazi lesbian activist who was later murdered. So I won't waste your time by talking about how bad it can get to be gay here (although it's worth noting that I've seen at least one interesting argument about how the places in Africa where homosexuality is most heavily punished are also the ones with the strongest national dialogue, and thus arguably some of the best ones to actually be gay). Besides, I've become somewhat numb to the situation's sheer awfulness since arriving last year. What catches my attention these days is unfamiliar cultural angles and arguments.

While reading the local paper, I recently came upon yet another gay-shaming article -- but instead of railing about God's will, the article talked about cultural imperialism. Specifically, it argued that gays and lesbians are gay and lesbian **only because of the West**. Gays and lesbians, the theory goes, have been so influenced by the Sodom and Gomorrah that is the West that they've internalized our permissive, scandalous sexual mores. (Those of us who actually come from the West are, of course, a little confused by how our fractured native cultures -- still fiercely arguing about homosexuality within themselves -- might create such an influence.) An African proud of his or her Africanness, who rejects the colonial West, will therefore not only wear African traditional garb and participate in African traditional ceremonies but will also be straight. (Ironically, some historians have pointed out that much of Africa was much less homophobic before Western missionaries came in.)

I got a front-line view of this attitude when I took a newspaper to the Post Office for photocopying. "Another article about lesbians!" snorted the postmaster -- they're getting to know me around there. He took the papers from me and shuffled through my requested pages. "Is it true," he asked, "that President Obama supports lesbians?"

"Yes," I said.

He looked shocked; I wondered if he'd expected me to say no. "What?!" he cried, and took a moment to regain his composure. "Well, that's American culture," he said finally. "It's not African culture."

I took a deep breath and pressed my lips together. I'd be in big trouble with my employer if I kicked up a storm at the Post Office, but oh, man -- in that moment, I really, really **wanted** to. "How much do I owe you?" I asked instead, and went home to lose myself in a nice sex-positive book.

Personally, what I find most intriguing about these assertions of cultural imperialism is how they compare to similar assertions in the West. I'm a kinkster and pro-BDSM activist, but I'm also a feminist, which can make for some serious anxiety. A lot of my coming-out process involved both a difficult internal struggle and my observations of arguments between kinksters and anti-BDSM feminists, who often make very similar allegations to these African speakers on "cultural imperialism."

The very articulate BDSM blogger Trinity (who, of late, has sadly decreased her involvement in the blogosphere) has spent lots of time analyzing and participating in those arguments. One of my favorite Trinity posts, titled "Why BDSM?", hosts a radical feminist commenter who writes:

If we lived in a healthy society, the idea of BDSM would not even come up in the first place. BDSM is here, as a manifestation of that unhealthiness, but to try to 'stop' the people who aren't being coerced into it would do more harm than the thing itself....

I am not saying tolerance of BDSM directly causes our sick society, but that it is a very strong symptom of a society were hierarchy, inequality and degradation are seen as the norm of human relations. Accepting BDSM is accepting this status quo. ... by challenging all inequality, including that in BDSM, we are putting forward the idea that other possibilities are available.

In other words: the Patriarchy made me kinky, and if I don't challenge kink then I'm supporting the Patriarchy. I would imagine that Africans pushing the cultural imperialism argument would say something similar: Western colonial influence made you gay, and if you don't challenge homosexuality then you're supporting Western colonial influence.

Well, "with us or against us" arguments are inherently flawed. And then there's the fact that, similarly to homosexuals, many of us kinksters consider our desires to be innate and largely unchangeable. So if our desires can't be changed, then what exactly is accomplished by shaming us through anti-oppressive theory-speak? (And make no mistake -- for those of us who take the theory seriously, it really does feel shameful to find others telling us we're in opposition, even within the private sphere of sexuality.) I'm not remotely convinced that our sexuality arose solely because of an oppressive society -- but even if it's true, then what am I, or African gay people, supposed to actually **do** in order to challenge the sick status quo? Give up on our desires and never have satisfying sex again?

I tend to think that the idea of sexual orientations or innateness is a red herring -- not because I believe that innateness doesn't exist, but because it's not actually relevant to sexual morality. What **should** be important is only the question of whether all involved

sexual partners are consenting adults, not whether their desires are innate. Alas, it's clear that across the world, people who are instinctively grossed out by alternative sexuality will always find ways to reframe the question into how our **acts** are just plain wrong and our **consent** is irrelevant -- and that's as true of some feminists and cultural loyalists as it is of Bible-thumpers.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://carnalnation.com/content/51544/1133/colonized-libidos

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VEGAN:

[theory] Confections of a Pickup Artist Chaser

I've been vegetarian since 2009 and vegan since 2011; I wrote this in 2012.

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Confections of a Pickup Artist Chaser

There are delicious recipes at the end! Read this article for the recipes!

I feel hyper-aware that this piece may alienate some readers, because it's a post about being vegan, i.e. not eating animal products. Lot of folks are touchy about that. So, I want to do some pre-emptive damage control: I want to clarify up front that **I have no interest in calling anyone an asshole**. If you're not vegan, then I want to try and change your mind... but I don't think you're an Incontrovertibly Bad Person, and I hope we can still be friends.

And, look, I'm not gonna pretend I'm perfect. I screw up all the time, on all kinds of social justice issues, and I'll be learning for the rest of my life.

For me, the hardest thing about being vegan has nothing to do with the food, although I think many foods made from animal products are delicious, and occasionally I have trouble resisting them. For me, the hard part is all about social situations. If I'm at a social event where non-vegan food is served and there are no other vegans, sometimes I just eat it -- especially if it will Become A Big Social Problem if I don't eat it. I also sometimes eat non-vegan food that's been rescued from the trash (some of us call this "freegan"). And occasionally, when I'm spending a lot of time with someone who's non-vegan, then I'll sometimes break veganism in front of them in order to reassure them that I'm not judging them. I have vegan friends who consider this an unacceptable level of accommodation; sorry folks.

I am aware that stigmatizing, judging, and attacking non-vegans is one tactic for convincing them to go vegan. Personally, I find it stressful and frequently

counterproductive. I'd rather set an example and be welcoming. (Yet I acknowledge that it's possible I wouldn't be able to do this effectively if aggressive vegans did not exist. Aggressive vegans help create the space where I get to look "reasonable" and "welcoming." The blogger Kinsey Hope once wrote a really brilliant activist typology that describes these dynamics. And of course, it's worth noting that I'm often characterized as an appeaser by feminists, too.)

So. That said? If you think you're going to Get Upset Or Offended by this post, please just don't read it. Seriously. But if you're willing to not freak out for a moment, then here are my two primary arguments for why you should go vegan:

1. ***It's easy.*** Yes, there will be some shitty social situations: awkward moments at restaurants, pushback from your non-vegan friends, and so on. Yes, you will have to avoid some very delicious foods. And food labels will become a whole new world of confusion. But even with all these factors, **veganism really isn't as hard as people make it out to be**.

There's a **lot** of delicious vegan food out there. A number of my favorite foods were vegan before I went vegan, and some of yours probably are as well. (Recipes coming up!) Here is a free online vegan starter guide that includes recipes. Here is a very comprehensive list of vegan cookbooks; they range from "easy" to "incredibly complicated Martha-Stewart-land." I am a fiend for baked goods, and I like *Vegan Cupcakes Take Over The World* by Isa Chandra Moskowitz and Terry Hope Romero. And there's an increasing number of high-quality all-vegan restaurants. My favorite ones in Chicago are Native Foods (delicious cardamom rose cupcakes!) and Urban Vegan (delicious fake orange chicken!).

I won't get involved in appeals-to-healthitude, because I know both healthy vegans and unhealthy vegans, and the science is inconclusive... but I will point that out again: the science is inconclusive. Unless you have an unusual disorder, **modern nutrition has identified *no* conclusive scientific reasons for not being vegan**. Plus: **If you aren't vegan, but you don't pay any attention to eating healthy food, then you're being a hypocrite if you make a "health argument" for being non-vegan even if the science was conclusive, which it's not.** And! If you're really into health, there's a highly-recommended book called *Thrive* written by a vegan professional athlete named Brendan Brazier.

Some of my friends specifically do things like convince people to try veganism for short periods, or run Vegan Weeks at universities or whatever, just to show how (a) delicious and (b) easy vegan food can be. It works surprisingly well. A key ingredient in my own adoption of veganism was knowing vegans, and seeing how simple it was to be vegan. I used to push back really strongly... I think I resisted mostly because it was very hard to acknowledge that by eating animal products, I was participating in an incredibly fucked up system. First I had to recognize that I was doing something really **bad**, that I had been doing so for my entire life, and that most people I love do it too. This is a familiar problem for activists, of course; most people resist acknowledging that they participate in a racist, sexist culture, too. (As one of my vegan friends puts it: "I've found that people usually go through the strongest asshole anti-vegan phase right before they convert to veganism.")

Of all the social-justice acts out there, I actually think veganism is one of the lowest-hanging fruit. It's just so **easy** that the only reason non-vegan culture can possibly persist is through a really high degree of not giving a shit. In a way, that's understandable; I don't have much of a connection to animals myself. A lot of my vegan friends love animals and want to be around them all the time; I don't. If a smelly dog never jumps on me again, it will be too soon. But the fact is, animals have senses and feelings. Interacting with any animal for longer than thirty seconds can conclusively show you that animals like and dislike things, and that they feel something that looks exactly like pain. Which brings me to....

2. ***If you care about consent, then veganism is transparently the right thing to do.*** There are environmental arguments and stuff, but I mean, seriously, let's call a spade a spade: when you eat meat, you're eating the murdered body of an animal who died for no reason other than your transient pleasure. As for animal products: many things that happen to animals on factory farms are abominable and obscene, as two minutes of Googling or this website or this video can show you.

Even if you decide to eat animal products that come only from well-treated animals, there's no way to be sure that those animals were actually well-treated unless you're raising them yourself. As this vegan FAQ points out, there's an amazing amount of animal suffering that still occurs on "humane" farms. *(Salon* has written about it, too.) Some of those farms are doubtless fairly pleasant for the animals, but others.... Well, let's just say that calling some "humane" farms more merciful than factory farms is like saying that being burned alive is preferable to dying in a medieval torture device.

Personally, when I went vegan, a lot of the reason it felt easy was because I no longer had to spend tons of mental energy suppressing my empathy. I was amazed at how relieved I felt. Again, I'm not pretending to be perfect about it -- I eat non-vegan food sometimes in social situations, sometimes when it's about to be thrown away, and sometimes just when I'm drunk. If you need to make accommodations in order to feel comfortable being vegan, then I'm the last person who will criticize you. I'll just be glad you're taking steps towards being vegan.

It took me a long time to decide to go vegan, and I understand that it might take you a long time, too. I've listed a lot of resources in this post and I hope you'll consider looking at them. Questions are welcome in the comments, although I may not be able to answer them. I wish you luck. And if you're already vegan, then congratulations and high-5!

Now for recipes!

I promise that these recipes are beloved by non-vegans as well as vegans. In fact, even when I wasn't vegan, they were some of my favorites. When I feed these dishes to non-vegans, they are frequently startled that the food isn't vegan. (Sometimes I save the Big Reveal for last. Heh, heh.)

(One of my other favorite gentle pro-vegan tactics is to walk into restaurants and ask if they have anything vegan on the menu. When the answer is no, I smile and thank them and leave.)

Organic and fair-trade ingredients are obviously encouraged. I'm not as good about

organic and fair-trade as I could be, mostly because of expense, but I try to do it when I can.

Kickass Vegan Chocolate Chip Cookies

This is a modified version of a recipe that I originally found here, and some of the text comes from that recipe.

+ 1 and 1/2 cups of FLOUR

+ 1 teaspoon BAKING SODA

+ 1 teaspoon SALT

+ 3/4 cup of OIL

+ 2 tablespoons COCONUT MILK (or ALMOND MILK or SOY MILK)

+ 1 & 1/3 cups of UNREFINED SUGAR

+ HALF A BANANA

+ 1 1/2 tablespoons VANILLA EXTRACT (I've occasionally used RUM as a replacement; when I do that, I like to add some CINNAMON)

+ 2 1/2 cups OATMEAL

+ 12 oz. of DARK CHOCOLATE CHIPS

Heat your oven to 350 degrees.

Mix FLOUR, BAKING SODA and SALT together. Set aside.

Mix together the OIL and SUGAR. Mix until creamy. Thoroughly mash the BANANA into the mixture.

Add the COCONUT MILK.

Add the VANILLA.

Stir this mixture until it is a uniform color (this will not take long).

Slowly stir in the FLOUR mixture. Mix this well.

Stir in OATMEAL and CHOCOLATE-CHIPS.

Preheat oven to baking temperature (usually 350 F).

Place large tablespoons full of the batter onto an ungreased cookie sheet (an air filled cookie sheet works best, as the air between the two layers of the sheet keeps the bottom of baked items from burning).

Bake the cookies for about 9 to 13 minutes (ovens vary in temperature). Check them by gently pressing on the top of one of the cookies. If the inside looks moist, but not too wet, they are probably done. It might take you a couple of tries to get the time down, so bake only a few at a time when starting out. Do not, I repeat, do not expect to see them turn

slightly brown when done cooking. Without real eggs, they will not get that dark. They will, however, turn a golden tan.

When they are done, remove them from the oven and allow them to sit on the sheet for about a minute or two before placing them on a wire rack. Be careful with them as they tend to be quite delicate until they have cooled.

Kickass Chocolate Cake

I think I modified this recipe from an Internet source too, but I can't find it now.

+ 1 1/2 cups FLOUR

+ 1 cup SUGAR

+ 1/2 cup UNSWEETENED COCOA

+ 1 tablespoon GROUND CLOVES

+ 1 teaspoon BAKING SODA

+ 1 teaspoon CAYENNE PEPPER

+ 1/4 teaspoon SALT

+ 1 cup ALMOND MILK (or COLD WATER)

+ 1/4 cup OIL

+ 1 tablespoon BALSAMIC VINEGAR

+ 1 tablespoon VANILLA (once I replaced this with ORANGE EXTRACT and added some CINNAMON, and the result was amazing)

Preheat oven to baking temperature.

In a bowl beat together the OIL, SUGAR, SALT, SPICES and COCOA until well-combined. Add the remaining ingredients, and stir until well-combined. Pour into a greased enamel plate or cake dish and bake 20-30 minutes. Don't worry if the batter tastes quite spicy -- it mellows out a lot, when you bake it so that the end result is more chocolate with a spicy after-taste. Cool.

Then mix the following ingredients together, and pour the resultant icing on top:

+ 1 cup POWDERED SUGAR

+ 1/2 cup UNSWEETENED COCOA

+ 6 tablespoons COCONUT MILK (or ALMOND MILK or SOY MILK)

Tofu Tikka Masala

This is a modified recipe that originated with a friend.

+ 5 tablespoons OIL

+ 2 medium ONIONS, thinly sliced

+ 5 large GARLIC CLOVES, finely chopped

+ 2 BAY LEAVES

+ 1 inch fresh GINGER, finely chopped

+ 1/2 inch CINNAMON STICK

+ 4 CLOVES

+ 4 PEPPERCORNS

+ 1 CARDAMOM POD

+ 2 pounds TOFU

+ 1 tablespoon GROUND CORIANDER

+ 1 teaspoon GARAM MASALA

+ 1 teaspoon GROUND CUMIN

+ 1/2 teaspoon CAYENNE PEPPER

+ 1/2 teaspoon GROUND TURMERIC

+ 14 ounces CANNED TOMATOES

+ SALT to taste

+ 2/3 cup SOY YOGURT

Heat OIL in large, heavy-bottomed sauce pan.

Add ONIONS, GARLIC, GINGER, BAY LEAVES, and WHOLE SPICES; fry gently on medium heat until sauteed.

Add the TOFU, and fry until the pieces are lightly golden brown on all sides. (Here are some tips on frying tofu so it has a light crust.)

Stir in CORIANDER, GARAM MASALA, CUMIN, CAYENNE, TURMERIC, TOMATOES, and SALT. Cook for a while (10 minutes works).

Add SOY YOGURT and cook for another while.

As a general rule, the longer you cook a spicy dish like this, the spicier it'll be.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/05/14/food-justice-confections-of-a-pickup-artist-chaser/

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POLYAMORY:

[theory] In Praise of Monogamy

This post was published in mid-2011, and it got more attention than most things I've written. The reaction was quite mixed. Some monogamists felt that I was damning monogamy with faint praise. Some polyamorists felt that it was problematic for me to write a post praising the culturally dominant Western mode of sexuality, because it's already dominant. On the other hand, the piece was cross-posted at a number of high-profile websites, and I got a lot of positive commentary too.

My favorite comments came from Pepper Mint, a polyamory advocate who commented on this post when it was cross-posted at Feministe. *I really felt like Pepper got what I was trying to do. Here's an excerpt from one of his comments:*

"Monogamy is [perceived as] a hegemonic requirement, not an option that should be advocated. So when people espouse monogamy (which is rare, since it is hegemonic), they do it by claiming that anything else is impossible or they do it by making moral statements. I challenge you to find a mainstream article that actually lists out the pragmatic benefits of monogamy, like Clarisse has done here. I don't think I've ever seen one. Indeed, when monogamy is explicitly discussed in the mainstream currently, it often seems to be in 'is monogamy realistic?' articles.

"Note that this is all to the detriment of monogamous people as well as nonmonogamous people. When I talk to people about polyamory, I get a lot of defensive responses, for the simple reason that monogamous people are often monogamous because they did not know there was a choice, rather than monogamous by inclination or what have you. Discourse that presents monogamy as an actual choice and lists out the pros and cons of that choice is nonmonogamy-affirming in my book, unless it is hugely one-sided.

"We have a problem in the poly communities I engage in, where people new to polyamory spend a couple years unfairly trashing monogamy. This is partly out of anger from their history and partly because they've finally found what they are looking for and everything else looks shabby in comparison. But it creates ill-will where none need exist, it screws up people's approach to relationships, and it bites people later if they want to go back to monogamy.

"So as a polyamory activist I'm very glad this essay was written, and I've posted similar things myself in various forums. It addresses a hole in the discourse that is very important to fill."

Thanks, Pepper.

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In Praise of Monogamy

There are lots of different ways of approaching non-monogamous relationships, such as:

+ **Polyamory**: Usually emphasizes developing full-on romantic relationships with more

than one partner. (I've been researching polyamory since my teens, but only in recent years did I decide to actively pursue it.)

+ **Swinging**: Usually emphasizes couples with their own close bond, who have relatively casual sex with other partners. (Another difference between swinging and polyamory is that swingers tend to be more at home in mainstream culture, whereas polyamorists tend to be geeky or otherwise "alternative." The blog *Polyamory In The News* has a great, long piece on poly culture vs. swing culture.)

+ **Cheating**: One partner does something with an outside partner that wasn't accepted or understood in advance. In monogamous relationships, cheating usually involves having sex with an outside partner. Cheating exists in polyamorous or swing relationships as well: for example, a person might cheat on a non-monogamous partner by breaking an agreement -- an agreement such as "we don't have unprotected sex with other partners."

Just in case it needs to be said: **I never advocate cheating, ever**. As for the first two, I know both poly people and swingers that I consider totally decent and wonderful folks! I have more personal experience with and interest in polyamory, though.

Yet one thing that often gets lost in conversations about all these options is the **advantages** of monogamy. Of which there are many. Although I don't currently identify as monogamous, I had a very strong monogamous preference for years. I knew that polyamory existed, and I thought about it a lot, because it's interesting -- but I just didn't feel like it was for me. (In fact, my most adamantly polyamorous friend used to call me his "reasonable monogamous friend." He said I had examined polyamory enough to reasonably reject it, whereas he felt most people never consider polyamory deeply enough to have a thoughtful opinion.)

And lately lots of my monogamous friends have been getting married. So I've been thinking about the positive aspects of their relationship choices as I dance at their weddings, devour mini-quiches, flirt with their brothers and try to avoid offending their parents. (Okay, I've actually only flirted with one brother. So far.)

A Few Advantages of Monogamy (this is not a complete list)

+ **Jealousy management.** Some people experience jealousy more than, or less than, or differently from other people. Plenty of people in non-monogamous relationships experience jealousy -- and plenty of non-monogamous people handle it just fine, through open-hearted communication. (Often, jealousy is managed through very detailed relationship agreements such as a "relationship contract.")

But there are also plenty of people who appear to lack the "jealousy chip."

And then there are plenty of people who experience so much jealousy, who feel that jealousy is such a big part of their emotional makeup, that the best way to manage it is simply through monogamy.

Personally, I used to get a lot more jealous than I do now. I think I'm less likely to get jealous these days partly because I've gotten better at finding low-drama men. Jealousy has a reputation for being an irrational emotion, and sometimes it genuinely is an unreasonable, cruel power-grab. But I think jealousy is often quite rational, and often

arises in response to a genuine emotional threat... or deliberate manipulation.

There's another reason, though... I've also noticed that some switch in my brain has flipped, and I've started to **eroticize** jealousy. I occasionally find myself fantasizing about men I care about sleeping with other women, and sometimes the fantasy is hot **because** I feel mildly jealous. I cannot explain how this happened. It surprised me the first time it happened, believe me. What's really fascinating is that I think **the same part** of me that eroticizes jealousy, is the part that used to make me feel sick at the thought of my partner sleeping with someone else. Masochism: the gift that never stops giving!

I think it's important to note here that I didn't become less jealous because I felt like I "should", or because I was told not to be jealous. In fact, I had an early boyfriend who acted like I was a hysterical bitch every time I got jealous... and he made things much worse. With him, I just felt awful when I got jealous; I couldn't get past it. I felt like he was judging me for something I couldn't help; I felt like my mind was fragmenting as I tried to force myself to "think better" without any outside support; and worst of all, I felt like I couldn't rely on him to respect my feelings.

It was the men who treated my emotions like they were reasonable and understandable who decreased my jealousy. It's much harder to be jealous when your partner is saying, "I totally understand," than it is when your partner is saying, "What the hell is the matter with you?" Maybe that's what makes monogamy such an effective jealousy-management tactic: monogamy can be like a great big sign or sticker or button you can give to your partner that says, "I respect your jealousy." Which is not to say that monogamy is always effective for this -- we all know that monogamous people get jealous all the time! (Which only adds to my point that monogamy might be viewed as just one of many tactics, rather than an answer, when jealousy is a problem.)

+ **Focus.** There's an oft-repeated joke among polyamorists that "while love may be infinite, time is not." And sometimes, I've found it a little difficult to "switch gears" to a different partner. New Relationship Energy can be a little harder to manage in the polyamorous context than it is in serial monogamy.

I've heard of polyamorous couples who specifically take periods of monogamy when one partner really wants one. This seems like it could be problematic -- for example, if my hypothetical primary partner wanted a period of monogamy, and I had a secondary partner (or partners) with a serious emotional connection, then I probably would not be cool with straight-up ignoring my secondary for weeks or months. There'd have to be more of a conversation about it. But regardless, this whole line of thinking makes an interesting showcase of how sometimes, people feel like they just have to focus on one relationship.

Personally, I'm quite interested in S&M games of orgasm denial, though I've never had a chance to mess around with it as much as I'd like. I'm also interested in long-term lust management strategies like karezza, where the partners involved choose not to have orgasms -- instead, they maintain a low level of mutual arousal at all times. I have no moral problem with my partners looking at porn or having orgasms on their own, but sometimes when I hear about the effects of choosing not to do those things, it sounds like there's really powerful bonding potential there. Something to keep in mind for the next

time I'm really serious about someone, I guess. Monogamy isn't necessary for these things, but it would definitely make doing them less complicated.

+ **Societal acceptance.** Straight up, monogamy is the Western societal default. In some ways this makes monogamy hard to understand and communicate about -- because there are so many assumptions and built-in expectations, and folks don't always agree on those expectations! A recent study found that 40% of young couples don't agree about whether or not they're monogamous. That amazes me, because I have never assumed that I was monogamous with a partner until we had a conversation establishing that we were monogamous... but I guess I can see how it happens, if people feel anxious about communicating and fall back on assumptions instead.

Usually, however, being the societal default makes monogamy easier. Heterosexual monogamous people can get married with no problem, for example, and while marriage is obviously contested territory for non-hets, it's instructive that "gay marriage" is such a big political issue (while "polyamorous marriage" is currently nothing more than a specter right-wingers use to scare people about gay marriage). Outsiders usually assume that you're monogamous when you introduce your partner. Romantic comedies exalt monogamy; the media, and many people around us, associate monogamy with love. When you're monogamous, you never have to articulate your weird relationship structure to your parents. You rarely have to think outside the box about relationship problems, and you can go to any Western advice columnist or therapist and be sure that they'll recognize your relationship as legitimate. (Those of you who like privilege checklists might enjoy this monogamous privilege checklist, which is patterned after Peggy McIntosh's classic essay and white privilege checklist.)

+ **Some people just like it better.** Occasionally, people will toy with the idea of an "orientational" element to polyamory or monogamy: some folks just plain feel aligned with monogamy or non-monogamy. (I have similar thoughts about this as I do about BDSM as a sexual orientation.)

Personally, I always think it's really key, during any sex-positive critique, to emphasize from the start that whatever you like is cool as long as the actions you take are consensual. I know people who act all apologetic for being monogamous, usually because they've been overexposed to "polyvangelists" who argue that non-monogamy is "better" or "more evolved." This is silly! Liking monogamy doesn't have to be justified, as long as you don't turn around and claim that non-monogamy is bad and wrong. And liking monogamy is a perfectly awesome reason for preferring monogamy!

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/06/09/in-praise-of-monogamy/

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POLYAMORY:

[theory] My Top Questions About Dealing With Multiple Lovers

I wrote this in early 2011. The comments on the online version are especially good -- lots of viewpoints and resources shared. Sometimes my commenters just blow me away.

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My Top Questions About Dealing With Multiple Lovers

I have a lot more theoretical exposure to polyamory than personal experience, but I've been gaining more personal experience over the last year. It's often interesting, sometimes painful.

Some recent experiences are making me think I am not nearly as smart or as on top of my emotions as I like to believe I am. I remind myself that I have to be willing to acknowledge when I don't know what I'm thinking, but that's harder than it looks... I don't always take enough time to understand my feelings before speaking or acting.

Still. Through the stupid mistakes and the understandable ones, though my own failures to be sensitive and the little heartbreaks I've sustained, I've been learning.

One thing I think I've figured out is what I want: I want a number of different relationships that are ongoing, and one or two relationships that are primary, or especially committed. Ideally, in fact, I'd love to eventually have a permanent relationship with a primary polyamorous partner in which we have kids with each other, live together most of the time, etc, but are still polyamorous. That would be a while in the future, though -- for now, it's important to me to not feel as though my partners expect me to settle down or stay in one place or anything like that. It seems like any relationship I develop, even during this relatively early time in my life, could become a child-rearing relationship eventually -- like, years from now -- but if it does, I doubt I'd want to make it monogamous.

I recognize that we don't always get our ideal world. In fact, we usually don't. Although polyamory is a high priority for me, it may be something I eventually compromise on, given that the majority of people in this world identify as monogamous.

Keeping all that in mind, my preference for polyamory presents some challenges, and questions that I worry about. Such as:

1. **What are my responsibilities towards my partners' other partners?** A lot of poly people will tell you that if you get into a relationship with, say, a married polyamorous man, then you must also expect to interact with his spouse. In other words, don't assume that your relationship means you only interact with one half of a couple. I'm totally fine with this, but on occasion I've felt like I was getting sucked into the couple's problems, or like I was expected to have no individual relationship with my partner -- that I always had to go through his primary partner.

Yes, it is certainly my responsibility to communicate with my partners' other partners and to be friendly with them. But I need to set boundaries on that too -- just dating a poly guy

does not make me their relationship therapist, and it doesn't make me best friends with his other girlfriends (or boyfriends, for that matter). I am responsible for what I do, but I'm not responsible for what he does. I am responsible for how I treat his spouse, but I can't be responsible for how he treats his spouse.

But what if I'm already friends with someone, and one of my partners gets involved with that person? Do I have special responsibilities in that case? I'm still figuring that one out.

2. **When is it actually the best time to start talking about polyamory and setting out relationship definitions?** My approach so far has been to put poly on the table during initial conversations, and then talk about it more when the topic of the relationship comes up. But I've been thinking lately that I probably should go into more detail sooner, because people have such different stereotypes of open relationships that I can't be sure they're on board with what I'm talking about unless we've discussed polyamory in-depth.

I feel like I talk to a lot of people who think they want a supposedly "polyamorous" relationship because they see it as a no-strings-attached free-for-all, and that's definitely not what I want. Or I talk to people who back away from polyamory for the same reason. I see polyamory as being about **more** commitment to relationship negotiation, not less. I see it as being about setting individual boundaries, if necessary -- it's not about having no boundaries. I see it as being about creating a secure situation for all parties involved -- not making anyone insecure, or ignoring anyone's needs. And being polyamorous doesn't make my relationships unimportant to me. Being in love doesn't seem at odds with polyamory for me.

This is a hard thing to communicate in a small dose, though, especially if I'm dealing with someone who has minimal exposure to the concept. On the other hand, having a Serious Conversation about polyamory on the first date is a bit much.

3. **Is it a good idea for me to get involved with guys who ultimately want monogamy?** As I noted earlier, I might compromise to monogamy eventually, but poly is a priority for me. (Who knows, maybe I'll decide it's my ideal relationship formation again someday. This seems unlikely to me right now, but anything's possible.)

But what if I get really into a guy who ultimately plans to be monogamous? Is this a bad call on my part? On the one hand, if I go on a few dates with a 28-year-old guy who doesn't want to get married until his mid-30s but definitely wants a monogamous marriage when he does... I mean, why not have a relationship? On the other hand, I may be setting myself up for heartbreak in such situations, if he basically sees our relationship as "not real" from the start. This brings me to my next point....

4. **Some people see polyamory as a sign of commitment-phobia.** I've made this mistake myself -- in fact, the "polyamory as commitment-phobia" stereotype is so strong that I've occasionally reversed it and wondered if my desire for it was a sign of commitment-phobia. But the fact is, my appreciation for polyamory only increased as I became more certain about what I'm seeking in a partner, and as I gained more understanding of how to negotiate that. It's come along with relationship confidence and understanding.

I feel pretty okay with believing in commitment in the context of polyamory. But my

potential partners might not be. I already tend towards emotional caginess and am sometimes accused of being way too emotionally controlled -- I'm worried that I'll be read as a "player" (or a "slut") by people who write me off as a result. I'm also worried that some may be attracted to me because they see me as an emotionless player, whether they admit it or not -- indeed, even if they don't admit it to themselves -- and will be annoyed if I turn out not to be that way. Stereotypes and assumptions are tricky to root out whether we're aware of them or not.

Some days, I get nervous that the guys who are going to be willing to talk about and process relationships in the depth that I'm looking for, with a degree of acknowledged emotional commitment, are all monogamous. Then I remind myself of how many awesome polyamorous men I know, and also that I'm falling for stereotypes yet again, just by having these fears.

5. **Other questions:**

How open am I to casual relationships that don't seem to be going in an emotional direction, given that I don't have to give up on more serious relationships to have them?

How does being poly change breakup dynamics?

In the absence of monogamy, are there different signifiers that a relationship is serious -- or is getting serious? How can I get better at both giving and reading those signifiers?

What are the other poly stereotypes I've internalized, and how do I act against them? What are the other poly stereotypes I should look out for from others?

6. **Sigh.**

Rereading all my questions and rethinking all my thoughts makes me feel somewhat exhausted. Relationships are hard, and hacking the expected models makes them hopefully more fulfilling... but also so much more complicated. My life seems so weird sometimes; a week doesn't go by that I don't wonder why I'm not getting a nice typical job and settling down with a white picket fence and the monogamous husband and having 2.5 kids. That is not actually what I want, but sometimes the image seems seductively easy.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/04/11/my-top-questions-about-dealing-with-multiple-lovers/

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SEX WORK:

[storytime] One Blurred Edge of Sex Work: Portrait of a Sugar Baby

I published this interview in January 2012 at the gender-lens website RoleReboot.org, where I had just taken on the role of Sex + Relationships Section Editor. Olivia left the business in mid-2012, as you can read in the piece that follows this one.

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One Blurred Edge of Sex Work: Portrait of a Sugar Baby

Sex work is a controversial and polarized topic, and there are many perspectives on it. My position is complex -- but for me, when it comes to how we actually interact with sex workers, one important factor is whether or not they consent to and enjoy their jobs. I am absolutely in favor of giving better options to sex workers who do not enjoy their jobs, and I am horrified by the idea of a person being trafficked or coerced into sex that they don't want to have. But I also know people who have sex for money 100% voluntarily, and I do not want to deny their experience.

My friend Olivia, a 25-year-old graduate student, recently started advertising her services on a "Sugar Baby" site called SeekingArrangement.com. I think it's important for more people to understand these kinds of experiences, so I asked to interview her. Many people have pointed out that once a person starts thinking about the definition of "prostitute," it's a bit difficult to define what exactly a prostitute is. Some of my sex worker friends have asked the question: what exactly is the difference between a person whose partner buys her a fancy dinner after which they have sex -- and a person whose partner buys sex with money? Olivia has thought at length about this, and I'm grateful to her for sharing her perspective on that question, and others.

Please note that Olivia is exceptionally privileged. What you are about to read is a portrait of what the sex industry looks like for a person who is very privileged: she comes from a white upper-middle-class background, she is not desperate, she is being paid a lot of money, she does not have a drug addiction. Many other peoples' experiences in the sex industry are very different.

Clarisse Thorn: Hey Olivia, thanks so much for being willing to talk about this incredibly complicated topic. Could you start by defining a sugar baby site? What is it?

Olivia: I use the site SeekingArrangement.com. I don't actually know how many sugar baby sites there are, but I get the sense there's more than one. It's very hard to pin down exactly what it does. I guess it connects people, usually with a big age gap, who are interested in exchanging some kind of material goods or financial resources for some form of companionship that is often sexual -- but not always.

As far as I can tell, the site's founder is very against the claim that this is prostitution. He puts out a lot of publicity claiming that this site has nothing to do with prostitution. At first I thought that he was trying to evade legal consequences, but I think he actually probably believes that. The site has a blog that he controls, and you can look at it to get a sense of what he's thinking. One post I think is really interesting is called "Sugar Baby & Sugar Daddy: The Modern Day Princess & Prince?", which compares being a sugar baby to a kind of "happily ever after" princess fantasy.

So far, no one I've talked to seems remotely interested in hiring what they see as a "prostitute." They seem to want to be having sex with someone they find very attractive who is also someone they feel like they can respect, whose intelligence they respect. For example, someone I see occasionally -- the last time I saw him, he gave me money at the end and he said that he felt good about giving me the money because he knew I wouldn't spend it on, quote, "a designer handbag." He seems to think that I am reasonably ambitious and have my shit together, and he seems to feel more comfortable giving me money because he knows it goes towards my grad school costs and credit card debt. My ability to write with proper grammar, without overusing emoticons, appears to be my biggest sales point. Men have told me this outright.

That guy also mentioned feeling more comfortable because he thinks I'm from the same social class as he is. There are a lot of class issues coming up in these encounters, I think. Being white and from an upper-middle-class background may help me get clients. My background has also given me a ton of confidence that puts me at an advantage when negotiating. I do not think I radiate "take advantage of me," and I (nicely) tell guys who start doing that to go away.

The guy I was just talking about -- he also mentioned that he feels like he doesn't want to have sex with someone that he doesn't feel at least a little bit connected to. There's a distinction between meaningless sex and casual sex. I think these guys want casual sex -- maybe they aren't at the point where they want to deal with having a partner, or they're really busy at work, or they already have another partner -- they want casual sex but not meaningless sex.

In my encounters with these men, the money does two things. Firstly, it enables them to have a relationship with me that they wouldn't otherwise be able to have. Secondly, it puts them in this position where they can give me something valuable and have that be appreciated. The guys I see really want to feel appreciated.

Clarisse Thorn: Do you feel like this has given you any new insight into gender roles?

Olivia: Hmm.... It's made me feel more powerful. I definitely feel like I am the one with the power in this situation. When I show up, I don't feel like -- here is this rich, powerful person who is about to bestow wealth upon me. I feel like -- here is this person who is a bit sad and lonely, and maybe I can make their day better.

A lot of the men who are on this site want to feel appreciated, so it's important to them that the woman they're with give off the appearance of appreciating them. So for example, on the website there's a lot of talk about sugar daddies being "mentors" or "benefactors" rather than clients. They seem to want some combination of me asking them about their day, and they also want to feel like they're bestowing knowledge upon me about the world. One of the men I see will always talk about his opinions about money. He has complicated feelings about himself having money because he doesn't come from money, so he's trying to work those out. But he also keeps telling me in a very serious voice that money will not make me happy, that nothing I can buy will make me happy. I tell him that I can buy security and he says yes, that is one thing I can buy.

Other men seem to be having issues with their age. One mentioned that he's just turned 40, and that's really bugging him. Then he flaked out on me a couple times -- I don't think he was completely okay with his own decision to be seeing me. But anyway, often, another thing these men seem to get out of it is access to someone who has a bunch of youthful energy and optimism and just plain new ideas. A lot of them have mentioned feeling stuck, or bored, or cynical, or intellectually constrained. So in this sense sex is only one thing I'm offering them -- I'm also offering them optimism, hope, energy, and so on. Firstly, the sex is good in and of itself, as most of them aren't getting laid otherwise. But the sex is also a symbol of them getting access to my youthful energy or whatever.

I think the archetypal image of a mistress involves a woman being "kept" so that she doesn't have to work, so that she can be available for sex basically whenever. But I don't think this is what the men I see want. I am more valuable to them because I have other work that I am seriously invested in, and am having sex with them anyway. Again, these men are interested in a woman who they see as more "equal" to them -- in this case, defined by earnings potential -- and they seem gratified by the idea that they could help me enter their income bracket someday. This is, of course, still kind of patronizing; like I said, they keep using words like "mentor." It's also presumptuous. But I think a lot of them being patronizing and presumptuous can probably be attributed to age and wealth, and only some of it to gender.

I think I've learned more about class and money than I have about gender. It turns out there are people to whom $1,000 versus $3,000 doesn't matter that much, and I finally understand that on a visceral level. $1,000 doesn't mean the same thing to me as it does to most of them. I knew this, but now I *really* know it.

Another thing I've been struck by is exactly how much romantic relationships are worth. I've had several clients tell me they don't feel wealthy, and they feel like they worry about money a lot. I think they were sincere. Of course, my first thought was: don't you think that your $2,000-per-month prostitute is part of the budget that could be trimmed? But I think that maybe it's not, actually. I think *they* think that investing a lot of money in me is a good investment for them if it gives them a release valve so they can deal with the rest of their lives. They're probably right.

Clarisse Thorn: You mentioned that you feel powerful in your relationships with these men. But there are issues of your safety, right?

Olivia: I think there are issues of safety anytime a person meets someone they don't really know, especially if they plan to spend time in private. And especially if you're dealing with topics as sensitive as sex or money. There may be more issues of safety with this because some people really do believe that money can buy them anything. But for the most part, when I meet people they seem very respectful.

Things I do to increase my safety are that I tell my husband and my friends where I'm going to be, I tell them exactly where I am. I'll do things like take down a client's license plate number and text it to my husband. I've been thinking maybe I should look at each client's driver's license too, and text the client's name and driver's license number to my husband. I think some clients might feel threatened by that, though.

The most important thing for my safety is that I'm willing and able to walk away from situations. I'm not desperate -- I won't starve or die if I don't do this work. I meet all my clients in public first for a meal, and if someone sketches me out, I leave. I'm not so desperate that I'll get into a situation that scares me.

I guess I am at risk if I meet a really crazy person who wants to chop me up and put me in a dumpster. But I could meet a person like that during a normal night at a bar, too.

The major risks that I see include that I might catch an STD -- but I use protection. I might end up alone with someone who believes that the money he's paying actually gives him the entitlement to do whatever he wants to my body, but I've never encountered anyone like that. The thing is, as I said before, I haven't met anyone who I think would actually describe themselves as paying for sex. The terms on which I continue to see these men are probably less explicitly negotiated than an escort's terms would be. I don't have flat rates, for example.

I've heard escorts complaining that people who use sugar baby sites are unprofessional, and I think that from an escort's perspective they probably are.

Clarisse Thorn: If people are unwilling to actually talk about sex for money, it must be hard to negotiate your encounters. Do you have a set of steps for negotiation?

Olivia: I haven't been doing this for very long. It's varied so far. Usually, I meet them for some kind of meal, and we chat. We have a perfunctory conversation, like -- "How was your day?" Then one of us will say something like, "Tell me a bit more about what you're looking for. Why are you on the site?"

Then we'll explain our deal to each other. Like, he might say: "I'm divorced, I'm looking for companionship." At some point, money comes up. I am always extremely vague when I talk about money. I've found a good deal of variation in how squeamish people are about money.

For example, one client was saying that he wanted to get married again, but not yet. I said, "Huh, well, if you're interested in a more emotional relationship, how do you feel about involving money?" The way he explained it to me was that people are attracted to each other for all kinds of reasons, probably including money, so why not be up front about the fact that money is attractive. He seemed almost confused about why I asked. With that guy, I ended up sleeping with him before we even talked about money -- which was a huge risk, but I thought it might work, and it did. We had the money conversation immediately after we had sex -- at some point when we were taking a break, I asked what he was looking for more specifically from this relationship, and he said that he wanted to see me again, maybe once a week. I think I asked him his preference for a monthly allowance as opposed to every time we meet, and he said he'd rather do something monthly. Then when we were getting dressed, he pulled out $1,000 cash and handed it to me, and said, "I'll give you the balance next time we see each other."

With other people I can be more straightforward. Maybe they aren't sure how to set up the relationship, so maybe I talk about another client, like: "I have another client I see 3 times per month for $3,000," and they might say, "That sounds good." But some guys will just negotiate it per encounter. One guy brought it up very quickly after we'd

exchanged some emails. He said that he prefers to do a "per meet" of $300 -- he called it a "per meet" -- I told him that was too low and quoted him $1,000, and he said he'd meet me in the middle. Another guy told me that he would just slip $400 into my purse when he saw me, and that's exactly what he did.

I have one client I've never explicitly discussed money with at all. I had lunch with him, and we didn't negotiate anything, though we talked a little bit about our reasons for being on the site. The next time I saw him -- we were deciding where to meet, and he asked if he should get us a room. I said that I would like that, so I met him and we had sex. He knew it was my birthday soon, so as we were getting dressed, he said, "I know we haven't talked about money, so I got you some birthday spending money," and he handed me an envelope with $400. The next time I saw him, he asked about my plans for the evening. I said I was having dinner with a friend, and he handed me $400 in an envelope and said, "Maybe this will help pay for it." I'm lucky that I'm willing to accept $400 -- it's my lower bound, but I'm willing to accept it. Imagine if I hadn't been willing to take $400 -- that would be super awkward. Probably I should have negotiated that situation more clearly, but it worked out okay.

I've heard about situations where unclear negotiations did not work out okay. There was a *New York Times Magazine* article about the site published in 2009. In that article, there were some examples of unclear negotiations that didn't work out well. But it sounded like that woman didn't really know what she wanted, and didn't really enjoy the work. But I do. And I know other women who do, too.

I have a new client who paid me $3,000 up front to see me 3 times a month. But I haven't heard from him since our first meeting. If I were his girlfriend, I'd call him, but he asked me not to call him. So I don't really know what the deal with that one is. Maybe he's gonna flake out on me, but he already gave me $3,000, so that would be weird.

Clarisse Thorn: So, your husband. You mentioned him briefly. How does your husband feel about this?

Olivia: He does not seem particularly threatened. We already have an open relationship. I think he sometimes feels very visceral jealousy, but that's just like any other time one of us has sex with somebody else. We just have to talk about it.

Part of the deal here is that I'm doing this because I'm broke. My husband really wants to be able to support me financially, but he can't right now, so I'm supporting both us doing this. I think that's a real blow to his ego. To the extent that he gets bothered, I think it's because I'm allowing other men to support me and give me money; he doesn't care about the sex. Even though I see this as work, he sees this as "here's this rich successful guy who just gave my wife a bunch of money, and she slept with him -- so probably she's attracted to him."

I am kind of attracted to my clients, and I kind of get off on making them happy, and I happen to think that the age difference is kind of hot. I like having sex with them; it's not unpleasant. I like hearing about these guys' life stories. I think it's interesting. But these guys would never be a threat to my husband. I would never be sleeping with any of them except for the money. And I love my husband. I'm always very up front about the fact

that I'm married and I love my husband. My clients accept that.

* * *

This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/01/05/one-blurred-edge-of-sex-work-interview-with-a-sugar-baby-part-1/

and

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/01/09/one-blurred-edge-of-sex-work-interview-with-a-sugar-baby-part-2/

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SEX WORK:

[theory] A Sugar Baby Leaves The Business

I published this in 2012; it continues Olivia's story. Thanks again to Olivia for being so incredibly generous with her time and her thoughts.

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A Sugar Baby Leaves The Business

Previously on Role/Reboot, we ran an interview with my friend Olivia, a 25-year-old graduate student who had just started having sex for money through a "sugar baby" website called SeekingArrangement.com. In the interview, Olivia covered a lot of topics. She mentioned that she usually feels powerful in her relationships with her clients. As she put it, "When I show up, I don't feel like -- here is this rich, powerful person who is about to bestow wealth upon me. I feel like -- here is this person who is a bit sad and lonely, and maybe I can make their day better." Olivia also noted that her negotiations can be delicate, because some men are quite squeamish while talking about money. And she explained that she's married -- but it was already an open relationship, and she doesn't see having sex for money as different from the other kinds of sex that she and her husband were already having with other people. To deal with it, they're sure to communicate clearly. As Olivia said, "We just have to talk about it."

In the months since that interview, Olivia and I have hung out occasionally to talk about her experience with sex work. She's traveled across the city to meet me, and often bought me coffee; non-judgmental social support for sex workers can be rare, and I've seen more of her since she started the job. Although she really enjoyed the work at first, there were tough times too, especially after the novelty wore off. Recently, Olivia decided to stop seeing clients. We talked it through and she gave me permission to write about it. (She also reviewed this article pre-publication.)

Obviously, there were logistical complexities from the beginning. Taxes were a

nightmare. Olivia wanted to pay them, but it's not the easiest proposition. Then there was the question of paying off her debts. Some were simple enough, but then there were loans co-signed by her parents, and there was no way she could make any headway on those loans without talking to her parents... so Olivia had to maintain the fiction that she couldn't pay.

That was nothing compared to the complexities of feelings and communication, though. I've already shown you how hard it was, sometimes, for Olivia to talk about money with her clients. There are other, subtler problems that are hard to handle with empathy: for example, creating the Girlfriend Experience persona.

I've talked to sex workers who enjoy creating a "sexy dreamgirl shell" on behalf of their clients. One of them said to me: "I create that persona for my boyfriends anyway. It's nice to be paid for it." But as a feminist sex writer who's spent years working to understand my own sexual authenticity, this freaks me out a bit. I think it would feel terribly toxic and inauthentic for me.

It often felt inauthentic to Olivia, for sure, and that got harder and harder. "These men are very invested in believing that I'm super into this," she told me once. "I have to keep up the front, and make them feel like I'm interested all the time. It's literally my job to do that. When they tell me how happy I am, or when they inform me that I'm enjoying myself, I can't really contradict them, even if it's not true. Some of them use words like 'magical' to describe me, but the person they're describing is not really me. Sometimes I think these guys pay me because in a non-professional relationship, a woman might push back when he says those things. She might contradict his idea of her too much."

In fairness, Olivia naturally fits one glam stereotype of the middle-class sex worker: the sexually adventurous young student. It's such a widely-promoted stereotype that experienced sex worker activists speak derisively about it, and some escorts lie and say that they fit the profile when they don't. Presumably, clients enjoy believing that a girl is a sexually adventurous college student because it capitalizes on images of "sexy coeds" -- and convinces the client that she's not being emotionally harmed by the work. (I've often thought that it's way past time for "fair trade prostitution," where sex trade ethics are made into a competitive advantage. I've also thought that the most feminist thing I could ever do would be to open a brothel where all the sex workers are treated well. Too bad it's illegal.)

Of course, SeekingArrangement.com actively encourages the idea that a "real relationship" can emerge from these arrangements. (In our previous interview, Olivia pointed out the SeekingArrangement blog post "Sugar Baby & Sugar Daddy: The Modern Day Princess & Prince?" Another interesting one is called "Sugar Babies Do Fall In Love.") While some guys on the site really do just want to pay for straight-up sex, some become emotionally invested in the women whose company they buy. And we can tell from Olivia's experiences negotiating payment that a lot of guys don't like thinking about how they're paying for it.

Bottom line: more than one of Olivia's clients were into her for real, and she felt more and more uncomfortable about it as time passed. One man took a surreptitious photo of her and hung it on the center of his otherwise-bare refrigerator. Another client made faux-

offhand wistful comments such as, "If you weren't already married, haha...."

Olivia asked my advice on one of these guys, who was clearly falling in love with her from the start. She mentioned that she'd already talked to another sex worker about it. The other worker's reaction was, essentially, "What problem?" As Olivia put it: "She told me that the guy is basically a locked-in regular now, so what am I so bothered about?" But after a while, Olivia couldn't take how guilty and anxious she felt around this guy, what with the feelings she couldn't return. She stopped responding to his messages, but didn't tell him clearly that it was over because trying to phrase the email felt so awful.

"I was so unprofessional about it," she said. "In the end, he sent me this incredibly sweet note asking what he'd done to hurt me so badly. So my husband helped me write a 'it's not you, it's me' breakup email. I still feel bad."

Another facet of emotional difficulty arose when Olivia's husband started taking a medication that decreased his libido. This put the couple in the odd position of Olivia having sex with other men, but not her husband -- with her husband's full knowledge and consent. Although her husband tried to reassure her, she began feeling less secure and stable at home. And sex work is stressful enough that home security can really, really matter. Indeed, at one point Olivia mentioned: "One of my friends is tempted to get into sex work. But she says she doesn't think she can deal with it, emotionally, unless she has a partner at home who loves her and will back her up. So I'm not supposed to let her have sex for money until she's in a good solid relationship."

Finally, as Olivia fielded other life stresses, she flatly realized that she couldn't have anything extra going on. What with all the above conversations, we saw signs that the change was coming, but when it arrived it was both sudden and intense. "One day I just knew I had to stop," she told me. "It's bad, because we're behind on rent now, but I had to stop. My husband pointed out, gently, that we need the money. But of course he accepted it when I said I was done. Anyway, I managed to line up a good temp job, so we're okay for now."

I tried to show in the original interview that Olivia is very privileged compared to most sex workers. She's got race privilege for her whiteness, class privilege from her background; she's pretty and young and "valuable," and has tons of education to boot. She doesn't have a drug habit or some other truly debilitating issue. Although she's under some financial stress, she's not desperate.

And that leads me to this question:

If even a woman like Olivia -- who was well-treated and made a lot of money and didn't feel trapped; whose life sounded like the glam fantasy of today's high-end call girl -- if **even a woman like Olivia** eventually needed a break from sex for money, then what could this imply about the experience of less privileged women? I've got a bunch of sex worker friends, and I would never say that a woman can't be a 100% consenting adult sex worker who enjoys her job. But what I'm trying to get at, here, is that even on the "high end," sex work can be incredibly demanding. Even when sex work is as pleasant as it possibly can be, it's often very hard.

I'd like to see more conversations that acknowledge the reality of sex work as

emotionally intense and challenging, a job that can be bad for many people at many times in their lives -- without letting go of the fact that some people can and do freely consent to the job. (The sex worker Mistress Matisse has written a fair bit on sex work and emotional labor. And male sex workers don't always have an easy time; the porn star Tyler Knight has written about some of his more difficult moments, too.)

The point is not "sex work is bad and should be banned" -- but nor is it "sex work is glamorous and fun!" The point is, sex work is often hard work, even for people who are not mistreated or abused. As such, it deserves both respect (from outsiders) and open-eyed caution (from those who consider taking it up).

Olivia's not sure she's done with sex work for good. "The door is still open for future involvement," she told me, last time we met for coffee. "If I do go back, I think I may try for straight-up escorting, but I'm not really sure...." Presumably, working as an escort rather than being a "sugar baby" might evade some of these confusing, strangely-negotiated situations. Would it evade all of them? It's hard to say.

Regardless, I wish her luck.

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After June 1, 2012, this can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/06/01/a-sugar-baby-leaves-the-business/

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Section 2 Study Guide

This section was intended mostly to highlight various "other" perspectives that I feel are significant to sex and/or activism.

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1. Do you see your sexual identity as placing you in a community, or is it more private? Or is it a little bit of both?

1a. If you identify as part of a sex community, then are there ways you can contribute to that community? (For example, if you had evidence that abusive relationships were a problem in your community, what could you do about it?)

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2. What kind of educational needs do you perceive around sexuality? Is there a way you could contribute to positive sex education?

2a. Does your community have specific or unique needs around sex education?

2b. If you have children, how do you plan to educate them about sex? Specifically, how do you plan to tell them about the stereotypes and limitations affecting the different

groups described in this section?

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3. How do you look out for and support other members of your community, especially when it comes to sex?

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4. What lessons from your sexuality do you think are applicable to people who don't share your sexual tastes?

4a. Are there pieces from this section that feel relevant to you, even if they aren't talking about your experience or preferences?

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5. What are the overarching patterns that you see within the pieces in this section? How are these disparate topics relevant to each other?

5a. If some of these pieces are about people you have trouble relating to, then can you think of ways you could relate better to those people?

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SECTION 3:

Making It Complicated

In which we really get into it.

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When I think of this section, I think of:

People's ability to understand their own emotional and physical experiences and sensations is limited by what is safe to ask or know, what systems of interpretation they have received for screening that raw material, and whether they find it possible to connect with anyone who thinks differently about these matters.

~ Pat Califia

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RELATIONSHIPS:

[storytime] Chemistry

I wrote this in late 2011, while I was finishing up the first draft of my awesome book Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser. *I was still processing a lot of stuff I'd learned about pickup artist tactics and pickup artist attitudes, and that's reflected in this piece. But there's a lot more to it, from working out some stuff about polyamory to my feelings about marriage. A lot of these thoughts are developed further in* Confessions.

* * *

Chemistry

It's a long story and a short one, but I guess all of them are.

I'm 27. It's about that age: A lot of my compatriots are getting married lately -- most monogamously, some to a primary polyamorous partner. I myself have a stack of relationships in my past. Some were monogamous, some polyamorous. Some have been on-and-off, some short-term, some long-term (5 or 6 years was the longest). Lately I've been processing some tough questions about polyamory, but I'd like to stick with it.

And I've been thinking a lot about what I want in a primary polyamorous partner. The kind of guy I could marry. I wonder if I'll ever get to that point. I wonder if I'd know him if I saw him.

* * *

I met Mr. Ambition at one of the aforementioned weddings. Several people recommended that I talk to him, and we liked each other right away. Mutual friends used words like "zealot" to describe him; let's just say he's got an intense history of dedicated activism. Charisma, integrity, and pure energy pour off him. His words are almost always articulate and challenging. He can socially dominate a room without thinking. He works a challenging job ten hours per day; exercises two hours; socializes several hours; sleeps and eats when he can. He gives hugs easily, laughs easily, hands out compliments like candy.

Mr. Ambition is most definitely not a neutral personality. Of course, neither am I.

At the time, I was just coming out of the worst stage of my research on pickup artists -- a subculture of men who trade tips on how to seduce women. Also, I'd just had one of those breakups where I was too busy feeling stupid to properly understand how hurt I was. (Don't you hate those?) You can read all about those Dramatic Events in my upcoming book *Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser*. In the meantime, suffice to say that I felt... flattened.

Arguably, I should have had a sign taped to my forehead that read: "Emotionally Unavailable."

I went to dinner with Mr. Ambition later that week. At the end of the meal, he sat back and looked at me. "You're so **authentic**," he said.

"I haven't felt very authentic lately," I said frankly, but his words felt good. Like a balm. Like I was healing.

* * *

We got along excellently, had a lot in common, etc. Typical this-relationship-starts-well stuff. One evening, after we'd been out to eat in a big philosophical group, Mr. Ambition noted the hotness of my intense theoretical bent. "When you were discussing social justice and ethics tonight," he said, "I wanted to reach across the table and grab you."

He mentioned marriage within weeks. "This has never happened before," he told me. "I've never dated someone I thought I could actually marry." *Whoa, tiger,* I thought, but I had to admit that he hit a lot of my Ideal Characteristics as well. Intelligence, drive, charisma, **and** morality: it's hard to argue with that.

Our sexual chemistry was okay, but not climb-the-walls stellar. *We'll develop that,* I told myself. *He's less sexually experienced than I am, and we'll learn each other just fine.* Fortunately he's got some experience with polyamory, but in terms of S&M, he's another of those vanilla-but-questioning guys (I never learn). When we did S&M, I had to monitor the situation extra carefully because it was so new to him.

And for all his intelligence, it was really hard to talk to him about emotions. It wasn't that he was cold or distant; on the contrary, he's one of the most fiery people I've ever met. But he had a lot of difficulty explaining what was going on in his head. Indeed, he told me that he had a lot of difficulty **knowing** what was going on in his head. He did things like laugh when a friend hurt his feelings, then deny that he was hurt, even though I could plainly see the stricken look behind his eyes.

I wasn't surprised that he was more physical than verbal about S&M. Very straightforward: throwing me around, pulling my head back, digging his hands into my skin. He's incredibly strong, and sometimes I called my safeword simply because his strength scared me.

There was one particular S&M encounter... early in the evening, I called my safeword because I wasn't sure he was into it.

"Red," I said, and he stopped. "Is this okay with you?" I asked, and he nodded.

"Yes," he said. "This is good. Let's keep going." His voice was low and slightly rough; a marvel of certainty. He put his hands back on me instantly. My doubts disappeared.

We kept going. I watched my body, felt the lump building in my throat, monitored my breath as it became harsh and fast.

"Red," I said, and he stopped. "You're going to break me," I said, "I'm going to cry. If you don't want to deal with that, then stop."

This, by the way, is a difficult skill that I have learned: this ability to track my S&M reactions so clearly. I would never have been able to do it seven years ago, and I still can't do it during complicated S&M encounters. But now I can do it during simple ones. (Yes, "simple" and "complicated" are in the eye of the beholder.)

I really hate stopping an S&M encounter right when I'm on the verge of tears. It's worse than an interrupted orgasm. But I'd rather do that than break down crying and **then** deal with a horrified partner.

"That's fine," said Mr. Ambition. So we kept going. I cried. He started talking, and I was

surprised by how harsh his words could be. *That's more like it,* I thought.

Some S&M encounters have a rhythm to them, a poetry: a beginning and an end that become clear to the participants as they go along. This one didn't -- at least not to me. So I didn't rely on him to bring it to a close. After a while, I safeworded out, and took a breath to still my tears.

Mr. Ambition was quiet again. I was having trouble reading him. There was some energy caught inside him, coiled like a dragon, but I couldn't tell if it was violence or something else. I put a halt to my own emotional cycle and tried to focus on him. "How are you feeling?" I asked, but he couldn't tell me. I asked a few more questions, and he just couldn't answer. He just didn't know.

I never got another word from him on how he felt about that encounter. I wondered if I was being too careful in how I asked about it; I wondered if he wanted me to push harder; I wondered if I'd already pushed him too far.

I suspected there were some dramatic feelings trapped in Mr. Ambition. But I wasn't sure I currently had the warmth to coax them out.

* * *

In the past, I've fallen in love so hard that I felt like the world was black-and-white when I was away from my lover; I felt like I only saw color when I was with him. I have dated men where the chemistry was so intense, so obvious, that it hung in the air between us like smoke. I've had sex that felt like telepathy. It's pretty awesome when it works. And it's easier to get that with some people than with others: some guys, I meet them and it's like we speak the same language already.

With some guys, it's not instant, but it also doesn't take long to build our mutual vocabulary.

And then I've dated guys where the learning curve -- both sexually and temperamentally -- was much longer. It was less instinctive. But it was not impossible. So I know for a fact that **people can build chemistry**. Sometimes it's just there, but sometimes you can create it.

My relationship with Mr. Ambition was definitely polyamorous, but a few weeks in, I decided I was really into him... and I started managing my incentives. There was another guy I saw occasionally, with whom I had stronger instinctive chemistry. This other guy agreed with me that we didn't want a Big Important Relationship. *This other guy will screw up my incentives if I hang out with him too much,* I thought, and I limited my time with him. I set rules with myself: I didn't call him, I didn't text him. I knew: *If I let myself get too intensely into this other guy, that could inhibit my ability to bond with Mr. Ambition.*

I told the other guy that once my relationship with Mr. Ambition was more stable, we might be able to pursue something more intense. By the time we had the conversation, he said he'd already been thinking similar thoughts. That he didn't want to distract me from something that could be beautiful.

Similarly, there are one or two men in my life that I'm attracted to but don't want a sexual connection with at all. So I try not to see them unless I feel inoculated: I don't hang out with them unless I'm sure I can distract myself with my feelings about another man.

A lot of polyamorists say that "love is infinite," that we can love lots of people, etc. I agree with this in theory -- but there's also a polyamorous saying that "While love may be infinite, time is not." And hormones aren't infinite, either. I've learned my hormonal reactions, I've seen myself get imprinted by people... I've seen myself develop feelings and fantasies for one guy that made me 100% immune to another hot guy's charms.

Do I have perfect self-control? Absolutely not. That's why I'm trying to influence my own choices so carefully. I know that choice plays a huge role when we build relationships. **Choosing to commit is arguably as big a relationship factor as instinctive chemistry.**

... Arguably.

* * *

When I first got to college many moons ago, my roommate came from a family of immigrants with a tradition of arranged marriages. She and I stayed up late one night, perched on our dorm room mattresses, and I listened in fascination while she told me that her father wanted her to marry a man of her father's choice, rather than her own.

"I'm not sure whether I'll do it," she said. I watched her wave a hand airily. I was mesmerized by her casual acceptance of a custom that struck me as barbaric. "I mean," she said, "I'm cool with this guy that my dad's found for me. But I don't know if we're **that** cool. On the other hand, I can't deny the advantages of arranged marriages."

"Advantages!" I cried. I was so young... (Okay, I'm still young.) "What do you mean, **advantages**?!"

"Arranged marriages are more stable," she said. "Much more stable. I'm not sure I'd ever want to marry for love. That shit goes up in smoke."

From what I understand, there have even been studies about this: that people in arranged marriages report being quite happy, quite stable.

I've gotten the it's-not-passion-that-makes-a-successful-marriage message before, of course -- often from super-white, super-American Americans. For example, there's that infamous 2008 article "Marry Him: The Case For Settling For Mr. Good Enough." The article is sure to send any woman roughly my age into a panic. It's made enough of an impression that I **still** have conversations about it with other women my age -- almost four years after its debut.

I don't like the Settling writer's attitude. She's written with horror and anger about S&M in other venues, for example; and the whole Settling article has a generally conservative bent. But she's articulating some real feelings and important thoughts, and while I don't agree with all of them, I do agree with some. At one point, analyzing television, she notes that:

While Rachel and her supposed soul mate, Ross, finally get together (for the umpteenth time) in the finale of Friends, *do we feel confident that she'll be happier with Ross than*

she would have been had she settled down with Barry, the orthodontist, 10 years earlier? She and Ross have passion but have never had long-term stability, and the fireworks she experiences with him but not with Barry might actually turn out to be a liability, given how many times their relationship has already gone up in flames. It's equally questionable whether Sex and the City's *Carrie Bradshaw, who cheated on her kindhearted and generous boyfriend, Aidan, only to end up with the more exciting but self-absorbed Mr. Big, will be better off in the framework of marriage and family. (Some time after the breakup, when Carrie ran into Aidan on the street, he was carrying his infant in a Baby Bjorn. Can anyone imagine Mr. Big walking around with a Bjorn?)*

I've never watched *Friends* or *Sex and the City,* but I know the feeling.

Personally, I'm more of a novel girl. The other day, I found myself thinking of my long-ago roommate and her thoughts on arranged marriage while I read Monica Ali's beautiful book *Brick Lane.* Monica Ali is an immigrant to the United Kingdom, and the characters in her novel all come to the UK from Bangladesh. Some of the characters accept traditional arranged marriages, while others make "love marriages" instead -- often defying their parents, their whole set of cultural norms, to do so. Towards the end of the novel, one man reflects on the early days of his marriage:

We thought that the love would never run out. It was like a magic rice sack that you could keep scooping into and never get to the bottom. It was a "love" marriage, you see. What I did not know -- I was a young man -- is that there are two kinds of love. The kind that starts off big and slowly wears away, that seems you can never use it up and then one day is finished. And the kind that you don't notice at first, but which adds a little bit to itself every day, like an oyster makes a pearl, grain by grain, a jewel from the sand.

As you can tell, this character is currently unhappy in his "love marriage." Of course, the grass is always greener on the other side. What's the difference between the big love and the pearl love? Can they even be compared? Is it like apples to oranges?

But couldn't all this be a false dichotomy? Who says it's about arrangement versus randomness -- chemistry versus choice? Can we have both? Can we find the big love, and nurture that so it develops into the pearl love, too?

My ultimate conclusion about the Art and Science of Flirting, from my "studies" of pickup artists and also my entire life, is that flirting is all about strategic ambiguity. Deliberate uncertainty. Manipulating ambiguity and uncertainty can contribute to many intense feelings.

Some people learn this, and decide that the only way to have a relationship with chemistry is to include a constant generous dollop of uncertainty about love, loyalty, or something equally important. These people decide chemistry can only derive from little pieces of confusion: tiny mismatches that lodge underneath the similarities that bring people together, constantly unsettling, like a prickly burr. But I don't think that's what I want.

And after all, S&M creates extraordinary feelings too, but plenty of people do S&M in very controlled circumstances: pre-discussed, with safewords and so on. Arguably, S&M is another form of mismatch, of contrast, of uncertainty -- but it's a form that can be

managed. So I know all about creating intense uncertain feelings in controlled circumstances, and using those to contribute to stable and reliable loving relationships. Don't I?

Eventually, my college roommate caused a gigantic blowup in her family by rejecting arranged marriage. Her father didn't speak to her for a long, long time.

* * *

On my birthday, Mr. Ambition took me out to dinner. Then we went to watch fireflies by the lake. As was inevitable for summer in Chicago, we ran into lots of people we knew. One of those groups contained an on-again-off-again partner of mine: Richard, with whom I have... shall we say, a complicated history. I respect Richard a lot, and I like him, and I'm highly attracted to him... but I'm pathologically wary of him for reasons that will become obvious.

We greeted our friends. "How are you doing?" Richard asked.

"Happy birthday to me, asshole," I teased. "How could you forget?"

Richard sighed. "Jeez," he said, "sorry I neglected to wish you a happy birthday within, like, the first 15 seconds I saw you."

I paused, and took a moment to recalibrate: he wasn't reacting in his usual adversarial, teasing-back manner. On the other hand, history has taught me not to fall for it when Richard seems unexpectedly vulnerable.

"I'm sorry," I said. I kept my tone light-hearted, friendly. "You know I love you, right?"

"Do I?" Richard asked.

I tilted my head at him. Without thinking, I kissed my own fingers, then put my hand gently against his face, as if I were about to stroke his cheek. Or slap him. I guess it was a way of distancing myself and kissing him at the same time. I think he understood that I intended it as an uncertain-but-intimate gesture. But I'm never sure, with Richard.

"Call me," I said.

"No," Richard said. "**You** call **me**."

Hours later, Mr. Ambition brought him up. We were having one of those sweet, intimate, disjointed bedtime conversations. Mr. Ambition was lying back, half-covered by a sheet, and I was admiring the play of light on his chest. "Richard really cares about you," he said.

I stiffened, and sat up. "Maybe," I said. "But I can't trust Richard."

"His tone seemed wistful, when he saw you."

"I can't trust Richard," I repeated. "It's always a game with him. Sometimes I think that we have a real emotional connection, but if I try to talk about it or give him emotional feedback, he just ignores me."

"Maybe he isn't really ignoring you," argued Mr. Ambition. "Maybe every time you say

something, or give a little, it makes a tiny bit of difference. Maybe you just have to stay open. Keep trying. These things build up."

"You don't understand," I snapped. "You don't know him! Maybe he really cares, but even if he does, it doesn't matter! Things always end up the same. If I mention emotions, or if I act warm to him, he'll ignore me for a while... and then he'll be cold to me again. I'm telling you, I've been here before, with Richard. It's a trap."

Mr. Ambition didn't waver. "If you're strong enough," he said simply, "then you can walk into a trap."

His words made my heart crack, my breath catch. Made me feel like I've forgotten everything I knew about love.

When I was younger, I thought of my emotional strength like water: an embrace that could make someone I loved feel lighter. Water is a slow, eroding force that pulls beauty from the unexpected. Water makes wood into twisted driftwood sculptures; sharp glass into opaque dim jewels; rocks into soft sand. Water will eventually reveal the heart of everything it touches. If you let it.

I hadn't thought of myself that way in a long time. I felt like Mr. Ambition was calling me out, reminding me of who I wanted to be. Maybe I protect myself better, these days. But vulnerability is not always a bad thing.

I definitely could fall in love with this man, I realized.

"You're really amazing," I said, and threw myself on his chest.

He put his arms around me. "So are you," he said.

* * *

As a storyteller, I often look back on my relationships and pick out foreshadowing: the omens. And by now, I recognize the omens even as they're happening... and sometimes I change my behavior, but usually I don't. Perhaps this state is what they call maturity.

One night while we were out, Mr. Ambition sighed in an offhand way. He seemed tired, out of sorts. "I just want someone to take me on an emotional journey," he remarked to me. Then he added, "... No offense."

I mentioned this to a friend, later: "Mr. Ambition says he wants me to take him on an emotional journey," I said.

"An 'emotional journey'? That shit gets old, though," said my friend. I laughed, and agreed with him.

Another night, Mr. Ambition mentioned something about enjoying drama. I was with my best girlfriend at the time; she and I looked at each other. "Careful what you wish for," I said.

My friend said, "Yeah, I'm pretty sure Clarisse knows how to create arbitrary amounts of drama at any time."

"But I'm pretty sure I don't want to," I said.

Later, when Mr. Ambition mentioned that he doesn't usually know how he's feeling, he added: "My friends can often tell more about my own emotions than I can."

"So you basically outsource your emotional processing to your friends?" I asked.

He agreed.

Perhaps the worst omen was when Mr. Ambition told me, "I've never been hurt by love."

"Never?" I asked.

"Never," he said.

His certainty was so great that, in itself, it made me uneasy. Because I have definitely been hurt by love. And my greatest wounds were dealt by men who seemed sure they loved me. A man who seems sure might actually be sure, but he may simply fail to understand himself.... So these days, it's always men who seem certain that make me most uncertain.

There's another great quotation from that Monica Ali novel, *Brick Lane.* Here it is: "The thing about getting older is you don't need everything to be possible anymore, you just need some things to be certain."

* * *

I often felt like I was watching the relationship from a distance. I tried to resist thinking of our relationship using cold, manipulative pickup artist terminology and tactics, but sometimes I couldn't stop myself. I'd rather not talk about that.

I found more and more ways to manage my incentives. I noticed that one of my methods was telling friends and parents that I liked Mr. Ambition a whole lot. I think it was even true.

Most of all, I told myself that the lack of natural chemistry was a good thing, and not a bad thing; the lack of natural chemistry was **why** this relationship could last.

I was quite calculating about it, really, and maybe that was why he broke up with me. On the bright side, I kept my head during the breakup, which was nice, because I didn't keep my head during my last breakup. With Mr. Ambition, I didn't feel like my self-control slipped at all.

"We need to talk," Mr. Ambition said without preamble, when I met him in the foyer of his apartment building. "I'm having some concerns about our relationship." Once we were in his apartment, he said, "To be honest, I don't know how attracted I am to you."

I tried to measure his mien. I got the feeling, again, that energy was coiled tightly inside him. Like a dragon. "Are you breaking up with me?" I asked.

"We're just having a conversation," he said quickly.

We talked about sex for a while. Chemistry. "I don't think I like S&M, to be honest," he said. "I don't feel affected by it."

I thought: *Are you sure?* and *You definitely looked affected by it,* but it's both unethical and unwise to question someone else's experience. So I just said, "You know I don't want you to do anything you don't want to do. Have you felt pressured by me?"

"No, of course not," he said.

We talked some more. He ultimately said, "Look, are you totally satisfied with the sex we're having?"

"I mean..." I said. "It's not the most intense sex I've ever had, but it'll keep getting better."

"I think we should just be friends," he said.

"... Okay," I said. "Um. Is there anything else you want to talk about?"

Mr. Ambition seemed agitated. He seemed barely able to hold still. "I've never dated anyone that I respected like I respect you," he said. "Your charisma, your intelligence, your morality. But... I don't know. I don't feel like we're very authentic with each other. I don't feel like there's much warmth between us."

Maybe you're right, I thought. *But either way, it's too late now.* "Okay," I said. I thought for a moment. "I'm sorry," I added. "I really wanted this to work out." For a moment, tears startled my eyes, but I blinked them back.

"Are you all right?" he asked. He leaned forward. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

I looked at him and tried to think. I knew I was going to be very upset in maybe fifteen minutes. He seemed hurt, and I wanted to say something that would comfort him. I wondered if he wanted me to cry, and beg, and create drama; I wouldn't do that... but maybe it would help if I asked for something simple.

But I couldn't come up with anything, and I wanted to leave. So after a pause, I said, "You can let me go home and cry."

I said it as gently as I could. But Mr. Ambition seemed terribly distressed. "Ohhh," he said, and screwed up his face. He leapt to his feet. "I'm sorry," he said.

"It's okay," I said. "Is there anything else?"

"Sometimes I think men just aren't capable of the kind of commitment women are," Mr. Ambition said. He sounded defensive, even though I hadn't made any accusations. "Then again, you're not like most women.... You're kind of a hardass. You probably have this problem with a lot of the men you date, where you come across as kind of a hardass.... And to be honest, I don't think men really want to date women as smart as they are."

Jesus, I thought, *you already broke up with me; can't you just let me go? Why do you have to rip into me like this?* I wondered how much of what he was saying was about me, and how much was him trying to make sense of his own feelings. But even though I felt sure that he was confused, his words sent an icy spike straight through me. *"I don't think men really want to date women as smart as they are...."*

"I've worked really hard to become less argumentative," I said. "You should have seen me when I was a teenager.... I don't know if I can tone myself down any more than I

already do." Even as I said it, I wondered why I was still talking to a guy who'd just said that *men don't want to date women as smart as they are.* I felt like a bad feminist.

"Oh, you shouldn't tone yourself down!" said Mr. Ambition. "It makes you attractive.... Attractive intellectually, I mean."

I sighed. "Yes," I said. "Intellectually."

"I'm sorry," he said again.

"I'm going home," I said.

"We're still friends, right?" he asked.

"Yes, but give me some time to get over this," I said. "Probably about a month."

"What do you mean?" He came after me as I walked to the door. "Like, you don't want to see me at all for a month? You don't want me to call you, or reach out to you, or **anything**?"

I looked at him, again, for a long moment. I regretted his stricken expression. Again, I spoke as gently as I could. "Maybe in a month."

He offered me a ride, which I declined. My fifteen-minute estimate was almost on target: twenty minutes later, I stepped into my bedroom, leaned back against my door and burst into tears.

* * *

I ran into Richard the next evening, and we spent the night together. Richard put a fair amount of effort into convincing me to talk to Mr. Ambition.

"It sounds like he didn't actually mean to break up with you," said Richard. "It sounds like the conversation got away from him. He didn't start that conversation intending to break up with you; maybe he was looking for reassurance, and you approached his questions too logically, and he concluded that you don't care. You really like him. It seems like it's worth trying to make it work."

You may have noticed that both of these men tried hard to convince me that the other man cared about me. I decline to analyze what that means about me and my current approach to relationships.

However, I will say that I tried giving Richard more emotional feedback than I have in a long time; I even told him I missed him the next time he went on vacation. And I did try talking to Mr. Ambition again, and he acknowledged that he hadn't exactly intended to break up with me.

But then Mr. Ambition and I had several of those encounters that I think of as "post-breakup talks." I hate that shit. Every evening ended on a confusing, inconclusive note. He kept saying that he was "confidently ambiguous." We weren't dating, we weren't not dating. It reminded me of a phase I went through with a college ex-boyfriend, back in my monogamous days: my ex and I spent several weeks post-breakup being "exclusive but not together." So preposterous. People are so broken.

Mr. Ambition himself has described uncertainty as an "emotional amplifier"... but sometimes it amplifies in the wrong direction. After a week or so, I got fed up and cut things off. He asked when we would talk again, and I told him I didn't want to talk for a while. A few days later, I broke my neck in a bicycle accident.

It's like a goddamn soap opera, isn't it? Sometimes I can't believe this stuff happens to me.

* * *

Mr. Ambition showed up in my hospital room while no one else was around. I was no longer afraid that I might die, but I was leaden with morphine, and anxious. I awaited the neurosurgeons who would come install a big scary spinal brace, and I felt grateful and glad to see Mr. Ambition. I hadn't been certain he would come, although if he'd had such an accident, I would have moved Heaven and earth to go see him.

"I came as soon as our friends told me," he said. "There are so many people who love you." He said my name, and spoke softly, and the words bruised my heart.

"Thank you," I said inadequately.

"I had to skip out on work to get here," he said, and sat next to my bed. "We're in the middle of important negotiations. A billion-dollar deal."

"I'm sorry," I said. "Maybe you shouldn't have come."

He laughed. "Don't you think you're worth a billion dollars?"

"Probably not," I said.

He took my hand. "Is there anything I can get you?" he asked.

I wasn't allowed to eat or drink before the surgery. "Tell me a story," I requested.

Mr. Ambition retold a story from Dostoevsky's *The Idiot.* It was about a big-hearted man who comes to a small community and befriends an outcast "fallen woman." The big-hearted man gains high status in the community, but when people find out that he's friends with the marginalized sex worker, they become angry. Despite their condemnation, the man stays steadfastly loyal to his friend, and by seeing the way he cares about her, eventually the community accepts her too.

It was exactly the kind of story I expected to hear from him. I thought of the moment, sitting in bed, where he'd said: "If you're strong enough, you can walk into a trap." The moment when I'd realized that I could fall in love with him.

After Mr. Ambition finished the story, the doctors arrived with the brace. This contraption involved using power tools to put four screws directly into my skull, which stabilize seven pounds of metal. For realz. I was awake while they did it, too. Luckily I got local anesthesia, so the screws didn't hurt while they were going in -- but I heard the bone crunching, and I felt the pressure building. Also, my neck hurt a lot. It was reasonably horrible.

Some of my friends said later that they arrived at the hospital and tried to get into my

room while the brace was being installed, and they couldn't get in, but they heard me screaming. I don't remember screaming, so I deny everything.

I tried to talk normally while it was happening. I felt like the whole affair was probably more taxing for the doctors than it was for me. I mean, at least I had morphine.

"I'm sorry," I said to one of the doctors. "People must say awful things to you while you're doing this procedure."

"One woman told me how much she hated me," the doctor said tranquilly.

I tried not to cry, but I cried. Like I said: soap opera territory.

Mr. Ambition never let go of my hand.

* * *

Mr. Ambition visited me in the hospital for hours every day. He brought me all kinds of awesome vegan smoothies. He met my parents, and got along well with them.

When she got a moment alone with me, my best girlfriend asked what was up with him. "You guys broke up, didn't you? What's next?"

"I'm not sure," I said. "We haven't talked about it."

When I was able to go home, Mr. Ambition helped move me in. My air conditioner had stopped working, which is not fun for August in Chicago, especially for a person wearing a fur-lined brace. He promised to lend me a fan.

I can't turn my head, so when Mr. Ambition arrived with the fan, I didn't realize it was him until he was standing right next to me. I was alone in my room, lying in bed, wearing only the brace and my underwear while I answered text messages. This was not as sexy as it sounds. Unless you're a medical device fetishist. In which case, I guess it was exactly as sexy as it sounds.

The fan was quickly installed next to my bed. I felt awkward because I was half-naked and wearing a complex brace. I felt awkward because I couldn't help with the fan. I also felt awkward because I was racking up unpayable debt to a man who was, to all appearances, my ex. I tried to cover my discomfort by answering some more texts; then I looked up at Mr. Ambition. I couldn't read his expression.

I felt oddly expressionless, myself. I felt wrung out. I couldn't think of any words I wanted to say.

Maybe that was our moment of truth: the moment had no chemistry at all.

I gave Mr. Ambition my hand. "Thank you so much for everything," I said.

"Of course," he said, squeezed my hand, and left.

* * *

After my accident, Richard sent me a quick email, then didn't contact me for over a month. I remembered what Mr. Ambition had said -- encouraging me to send more

emotional signals -- so tried inviting Richard for dinner, and he didn't answer my text messages. When I finally ran into Richard, I asked why he'd been ignoring me, and he laughed. "I knew you'd accuse me of ignoring you," he said. I felt like I'd walked into a trap.

I was hurt, obviously. I was surprised by how hurt I was. The problem with my youthful water metaphor is that water is basically invulnerable, but I am not... and when I was younger and more open, I had much more trouble setting important boundaries.

On the other hand, I had to admit that it was funny, too. I mean, it wasn't like I didn't see this coming. I mean, my coming-out story includes a portrait of Richard at his most difficult. One of the friends I share with Richard made a comment about leopards and spots. Maybe my life is a soap opera, but it could also be a sitcom with the most amazing characterization ever.

I enlisted a cold, brilliant, evil-hearted friend to help draft my final letter to Richard. The letter was very short. Arguably, it was brutal. It read:

Economists recognize that the most robust relationships are formed through a plethora of implicit agreements. Apparently, these agreements are not present, and probably won't be. Cheers.

Economics arguments in the comments are encouraged. More importantly, readers may feel free to steal that letter for use on whoever is trying to pull their chain.

* * *

I received a couple texts from Mr. Ambition, a few days after he gave me the fan. He said there had been a death in his family. "But I don't want to talk about that, actually," he wrote. "I just want to check in and see how you're doing."

I thought about how he laughed when he was hurt. I thought about how he'd once told me that he wanted drama. I thought about his confusing reactions to S&M. I thought about how he outsourced his emotional labor to his friends. I thought about all the emotion I'd felt in him, coiled and caught and turned in on itself like a caged dragon.

I wondered if he wanted me to push him to talk.

"I'm so sorry," I texted back. "But I understand if you don't want to talk about it. I'm doing fine."

He invited me to a social event a week later, but I declined. I didn't reach out to him for a while after that, and he didn't reach out to me. I heard later that Mr. Ambition asked one of my friends whether they thought he owed me anything.

My friend told him, quite accurately: "No, you don't owe her anything."

If anything, **I** owe **him**. I'm not sure what I owe him, but I'm sure I owe him **something**. A billion dollars? Vegan smoothies?

Chemistry?

* * *

This post can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/09/30/storytime-chemistry/

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S&M:

[theory] Start From A Position of Strength

I wrote this post in 2011, and I wrote it carefully because I was worried that it might be interpreted as putting too much responsibility for BDSM on the submissive partner's shoulders. To be clear, I believe that both partners have responsibilities in a BDSM situation, but I also believe that the dominant partner especially ***must*** *be careful and responsive. I hope that this is a theme in all my work. I really don't ever want to encourage people to blame the victim. However, I think it's undeniable that submissive partners need a sense of themselves, as well as internal strength and resources, to do BDSM -- especially very intense BDSM. The goal of this post was to start figuring out what that means.*

* * *

A while back, I attended a workshop run by educator Sarah Sloane on the topic of BDSM and abuse. Sarah centered her workshop on a maxim that I have hereby stolen: "Start from a position of strength, and seek strength in the end."

I've been thinking about this a lot in terms of not just polyamory and BDSM, but sex in general. All types of sexuality are more pleasurable for some people, and less pleasurable for others; emotionally easier for some people, and more difficult for others. I have zero interest in telling other people how they "should" or "shouldn't" deal with their sexuality, as long as what they're doing is consensual. I want to say right now that nothing I'm about to write is intended to tell others how they "should" or "shouldn't" do S&M; it's just my own thoughts on how I might choose and process my experiences.

I can certainly consent to whatever, even if that thing is problematic or scary or difficult or complicated -- I can consent. The thing is, if I want to get something amazing and positive out of my experiences, I think it's good to start from a position of strength.

In some ways this is clear. For example, I think that being with a partner who genuinely wants me to have a good experience, who really cares about me, and who wants to see me again -- that's almost always a position of strength. Even if I have fairly intense, dark S&M encounters with that person, I can feel confident that he'll treat me with respect; that he'll give me space and lend me strength for emotional processing afterwards.

Also, knowing what I want is a position of strength; understanding how I feel is a position of strength. Being able to recognize my emotional difficulties, hiccups, triggers and landmines is a position of strength. Knowing for sure that I can call my safeword, if necessary, is a position of strength. On a physical level, I prefer to do S&M when my

body is in good shape -- when I'm well-rested and I've eaten healthy food. That, too, is a position of strength.

In some ways this can become murky. For example: I am rarely interested in one-night stands. There are a number of reasons for this, but one reason is that -- especially as a woman -- feeling like a "slut" can be scary, difficult cultural territory. And when I don't feel good about myself, my interest in one-night stands is even lower -- because I know that dealing with the difficult territory of "sluthood" will be harder with low self-esteem. If I'm feeling happy, strong, competent, valuable, and loved by the world... then one-night stands can easily be fun. If I doubt my worth, or if I doubt how much I deserve love... then one-night stands can be self-destructive.

The same goes for relationships with people who don't care about me. If I'm sure that a guy has no emotional interest in me, then having sex with that guy can be a dangerous emotional proposition for me, and one that I need to feel strong for. This doesn't always end up being true -- I've definitely had sexual encounters that left me emotionally unaffected -- but sometimes it's hard to predict whether I'll want more emotional investment from a given dude, so I try to keep it in mind for all encounters. (From a polyamorous perspective, I've noticed that less-emotional sex is often easier to handle when I'm already in a solid relationship with someone else.)

A couple I know in the local S&M community will sometimes have encounters that absolutely blow my mind, because they seem so difficult and so psychological. Here is an example: after the pair was married and child-free for many years, the wife realized that she might want children after all. This was a problem for her husband, who married her with the understanding that neither of them wanted kids. It became an ongoing discussion. Then the husband -- who is also the sadistic, dominant partner -- asked her if they could have an S&M encounter focused around the topic. She said it was okay.

So, as part of an S&M class that they taught together, the husband used her new feelings about children to rip into her: during the S&M encounter, he told her that she was probably too old to have children, that she'd waited too long. He added that she was too flighty for kids; that she'd be a bad mother. He added that he had always made it clear that he never wanted kids; that she was stupid for marrying someone who didn't want kids, and that this problem was her own fault.

I was not present during this class, but I heard about it from some attendees, and it sounds like it was really intense. He used a genuine and difficult sore spot to put his wife through a psychological S&M wringer, with her consent.

These days, I feel very tempted towards encounters like that: encounters that can tear me apart on a deep level, using important weaknesses and insecurities. I've also received email from other people who want to arrange encounters like that, and who ask my advice. An obvious problem is that such a relationship could easily slip into abusive territory.

So I've thought about this a lot, and here's my conclusion: those kind of intense psychological encounters obey the same maxim as other BDSM -- "Start from a position of strength, and seek strength in the end."

Thus, before having such an intense psychological encounter, I should feel that the encounter will ultimately -- through the pain and anxiety and tears -- make me feel more supported, more capable, more powerful in the world. One angle on this is to trust my partner a great deal, and be sure that he wants the best for me -- to be sure that in the end, he wants me to be as strong as I started... or stronger.

It's possible that I might not need so much support from my partner, if I get support elsewhere in my life: perhaps from friends, perhaps from a Kink Aware therapist, perhaps from a great job or a solid diet and exercise plan, perhaps even from another partner. (Of course, if I were planning to get extensive emotional processing support from other people, then I would seek their consent beforehand.)

Still, it seems like the easiest way to get support would be to get it from my partner, who would share more of the experience with me than anyone else. This would also build our intimacy, which is usually a major factor in having intense S&M encounters in the first place.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/07/20/slogan-start-from-a-position-of-strength/

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S&M:

[storytime] Predicament Bondage

I wrote this in early 2011. Amusingly, after I wrote it, one of the top Google queries that brings people to my blog became the phrase "predicament bondage." I think those folks are probably looking for porn, and I wonder if my article disappoints them.

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Predicament Bondage

Some people are masochists (who enjoy pain) but not submissives (who enjoy, well, submitting). Some people are really into discipline (with lots of punishment) but not bondage (rope, cages, etc). Some people are sadists (who enjoy inflicting sensations) but not dominants (who enjoy being in control). Some people are switches, who find that they can switch between roles -- they can be dominant or submissive; sadistic or masochistic... I am an example of a definite switch.

Me, I get positively bored if someone takes a long time tying me up. For other people, 45 minutes of elaborate knotwork = really hot foreplay. I don't understand this, but that's cool; plenty of people don't understand my preferences and we all coexist quite happily anyway.

So yeah, "bondage" -- rope, cages, etc. -- is not so much my thing. But there's one phrase I absolutely love: "predicament bondage." Predicament bondage is usually presented in a very elaborate way: for example, a submissive might be tied up with ropes binding him such that his arms are in pain -- but if he moves his arms then his legs will be in pain. It's a predicament! And it's bondage! Whee! Predicament bondage!

However, it doesn't have to be elaborate to be predicament bondage. I'm not into rope obstacle courses, but I started loving the phrase "predicament bondage" after a friend went to a workshop run by Fetish Diva Midori and reported back. He said:

Midori had two pitchers of water, or maybe a pitcher and a glass. She told us, "This is the simplest form of predicament bondage," and she had the demo submissive hold his hands straight out at shoulder height. Then she placed the water in his hands. The submissive had to keep holding the water; if he failed, he knew he would be failing Midori. But there was never any threat of "Midori's wrath" if he failed her. In fact, she spoke as if she was on his side, part of his team. In many ways, her sympathy for his plight made it all the more cruel, because she was the one doing it to him.

She explained this. She knew that his sense of disappointment in "failing" her was worse than anything she could actually do to him.

So, the predicament in that case was the submissive's increasing arm agony vs. his fear of failing Midori. For me, that concept is infinitely hotter than a rope obstacle course. Although for me, in practice, I'd also want the pain to be a bit more... um... personal.

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The first time someone flogged me, I had no idea what he was going to do beforehand; he and I had the strongest dominant/submissive dynamic I've ever felt, and I put myself in his hands with almost-total trust. A night came around when I felt that itch under my skin, the dark burn in the back of my mind... I knew I had to go see him. I wasn't hugely experienced, but I knew exactly what that slow burn meant.

It was late. He was in bed, and I lay down next to him. "I think..." I said slowly, "I want you to hurt me. A lot."

I felt him tense beside me.

"Why?" he asked.

I didn't look at him. "Why do you ask me questions when you already know the answer?"

"Sometimes I just want to hear you say it," he said, and stood up. "Take off your clothes and get on your knees."

I caught my breath; did as he said. When I felt the ends of the flogger trail lightly down my back, I wasn't even sure what the soft sensation meant, but I was already trembling anyway. I am surprised by my memory of how much it hurt when he hit me. These days, I don't think of floggers as especially painful, but then again, I seem to recall that he left more marks than I'm used to. (I loved taking off my shirt and examining the bruises in the mirror. I glowed for days, afterwards.) So maybe there was something particular about what he did, or about his materials. Or maybe it's just that it was my first time.

He created the predicament when I started to cry and flinch around. It was very simple. He leaned over me. "For the next three, keep your face down and your hands still," he said. "Promise me."

"I can't," I said. "I can't promise." I said it frantically. I was terrified of failing him. "I can't."

"You have to," he said gently. "So you will."

I cried harder. I sobbed so hard I couldn't speak. He stayed where he was, leaning over me, and kept a merciless silence. "I promise," I finally said, when I could shape words. My back was to him, I couldn't see his face, but I swear I felt him smile.

When he hit me again, I barely moved. After the count of three, he said he wanted to see how much longer I could go, but the answer was that I couldn't -- I started to flinch strongly again. Of course, he kept hitting me, if only for that. But at least I hadn't broken my promise. Hadn't failed him.

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I've heard about a game in which the submissive partner stands next to a wall, and holds two coins against the wall -- one in each hand. The dominant then does, you know, some stuff. On the submissive's part, dropping the coins spells failure. This sounds pretty hot, and it's one way to make a concrete predicament. But during the above encounter -- my first time being flogged -- I assure you that it was plenty hot enough without any coins. With only my promise and my awareness to keep me in line.

Sometimes I can't obey the order, no matter how hard I try. My partner may order me not to move, for example, when I can't help moving. If I were in the above scenario, with the coins, I'm not confident that I wouldn't drop them. It's scary -- especially if I love him, because then all the emotions are multiplied. But even if I'm not in love -- as long as he's got me in the right mental space, then if I fail, I will say "I'm sorry" over and over. I'll be terrified of his anger; I'll feel like I deserve punishment, and if he doesn't keep hurting me I'll feel abandoned.

The more I fail, the more it hurts -- more than physical pain ever could. Slamming up against my own limits makes me feel terribly inadequate. It's hot, but it's dangerous; it can rip me apart. At times like that, I often need my partner to tell me after we're done: "I still like you and think you're a good person."

And sometimes I need to hear that especially if I safeword out of the encounter, because sometimes -- not always, but sometimes -- calling my safeword can feel like the worst failure of all.

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When I trace some of the weirdest and most random situations that get me hot, I see that predicaments come up all the time. For example, I have a terrible tendency to try and make out with a partner right before we're expected to be somewhere. I might be totally cold 30 minutes before we have to leave, but 10 minutes before we have to leave, ding! It's like a switch flips. We've got to leave, but I grab him and now he's turned on, oh no!

And now we're late! Whee!

One of my exes pointed out my tendency to make out with him while his car was stopped at traffic lights that were about to turn green. "I know!" I said. "I don't really get why I do that, myself." He responded, "Predicament bondage!"

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Sometimes, when the pain is getting intense, I'll play a little game with my partners. (Kind of a game, except it's also serious, or it feels serious at the time; usually, when I start playing this game, I am not even close to coherent enough to ponder tactics; I'm running on instinct.) I think of this game as the "aren't you scared of the neighbors" game. In the "aren't you scared of the neighbors" game, I start making noise loud enough that I might catch outsiders' attention. Part of me is hoping that my partner is worried about the neighbors; that he'll relent, that I can use my tiny advantage to convince him to pull back. That I can play for a moment of relief, a smidgen of mercy.

Of course, if I'm lucky, my partners will then just order me to be quiet while they hurt me. Which creates a predicament! Because being quiet is actually not at all easy, and it gets more difficult the more it hurts.

And then there's the distraction game. I don't always do BDSM with partners I'm sexually attracted to; even with partners I'm sexually attracted to, I don't always feel sexual during our BDSM encounters. But when I feel very attracted during a BDSM encounter, oh, man. That's when I play the distraction game, which involves attempting to distract him by turning him on. Again, I'm not really coherent enough to be planning strategy at times like this; I'm more going on instinct; instinctively, it's like I'm trying to bargain. *Maybe if I can turn him on, he'll have sex with me instead of hurting me....*

If I'm lucky, he'll recognize what I'm doing; he'll be pleased, amused even, but he won't stop. One recent partner had me handcuffed to a car seat while he was hurting me. (Doing this in his car was not my idea, but at least we weren't moving. Nor were we paused at a traffic light.) I couldn't move too much, so I started licking his hand when he reached for me. Kissing his palm, his fingers -- he groaned, and then he laughed.

"You **are** a switch," he said, "trying to control me even now." And he didn't stop.

* * *

"No," I breathed, a few months ago, during an encounter with someone who's really good at this. "You don't get to say no," he replied, so I bit back the word. Had to fight against my own desperate instinct to say it, over and over.

Later, he murmured, "It's so cute how you act like you don't want this," as he leaned in to inflict dark bruises on my shoulder. His words almost brought me to tears. *But I **don't** want it. Do I? How can I want something that hurts like this? But I'm not stopping him -- did I really ask for this -- I must want it* -- Forcing me to face up to my own consent: a predicament?

I fought back when he hurt me, instinctively pushing him away. "Don't push me away," he instructed. "Put your arms around me," and I did. But we moved around, and moved

again, so I had my arms back -- and again, I couldn't seem to control my instinctive struggling.

And so he stopped for a moment, held my arms in place, and laid down the law. He knows I very much prefer some kinds of pain over other kinds of pain, so he told me this: "If you want the kind of pain you **like**, you have to let me in close." Layer upon layer: he's not just forcing me to take the pain; he's making me complicit. I think there were also practical considerations, in that it was actually difficult for him to control how he hurt me when I struggled a lot, but, still.... It was so hot it made me gasp.

I'm not sure, but I suspect that a few years ago, I might not have been able to handle that level of complicitness: forcing me to acknowledge what I like. Back then, I was too appalled by my own desires. Now, this level of complicitness adds another level of pain -- emotional pain; mild pain that I can cope with -- which is awesome. But although feeling complicit is a new tactic, it's part of an old game. It's merely another kind of predicament.

Fundamentally, what's hot about predicament bondage isn't the mechanics of what my partner says or does. It's not about the scenario or the equipment or the exact words. It's knowing that he won't stop hurting me, no matter how I fight or beg or scream. It's feeling that every moment, every action reinforces how much I'm in his power.

It's knowing there's no way out.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/01/07/storytime-predicament-bondage/

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RELATIONSHIPS:

[theory] Relationship Tools: Monogamy, Polyamory, Competition, and Jealousy

I wrote this in 2012, but it's the culmination of over a decade of thought. I came across my first polyamory books when I was very young, and I remember that even though I was inexperienced, I felt super frustrated by how most polyamorists discuss jealousy. They were incredibly un-empathic about it; the advice always seemed to boil down to "Get over it," with a dollop of "Stop being so selfish," and without any acknowledgment of how painful and difficult jealousy can be for the person who's feeling it. But at the same time, most monogamists aren't much better about this topic! Many monogamists approach jealousy as something that requires no examination at all.

In this essay, I'm trying to come to a better understanding of all these dynamics. I also seek to integrate them with BDSM theory, which I'm convinced has a much stronger

bearing on jealousy than most people will admit.

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Relationship Tools: Monogamy, Polyamory, Competition, and Jealousy

Last year, I wrote a piece called "In Praise of Monogamy." I currently practice polyamory in my relationships, but I spent years dating monogamously. I've noticed that when people talk about monogamy, they usually either assume that it's the only way to go... or they assume that it has to be thrown out the window entirely. I think that this either-or approach is completely wrongheaded, so the goal of "In Praise of Monogamy" was to talk about the advantages of monogamy in a more neutral, nuanced way. Different relationship models are all tools in a toolbox, and some people are better with some tools than others.

"In Praise of Monogamy" was probably one of my most successful articles ever -- it was republished at a ton of websites, including high-profile venues like *The Guardian.* Simultaneously, the article got a lot of really mixed comments. Some people felt that I wasn't praising monogamy enough; others felt that I wasn't praising non-monogamy enough; there were lots of other frustrations too. My big takeaway was that these conversations don't happen enough, most people aren't used to having them, and it's really hard to know where it start.

Jealousy is one obvious starting point, because people always bring it up in conversations about non-monogamy. I talked a little bit about jealousy in "In Praise of Monogamy." If you've recently read that piece, then feel free to skip to the end of the following italicized excerpt:

Some people experience jealousy more than, or less than, or differently from other people. Plenty of people in non-monogamous relationships experience jealousy -- and plenty of non-monogamous people handle it just fine, through open-hearted communication.

But there are also plenty of people who appear to lack the "jealousy chip."

And then there are plenty of people who experience so much jealousy, who feel that jealousy is such a big part of their emotional makeup, that the best way to manage it is simply through monogamy.

Personally, I used to get a lot more jealous than I do now. I think I'm less likely to get jealous these days partly because I've gotten better at finding low-drama men. Jealousy has a reputation for being an irrational emotion, and sometimes it genuinely is an unreasonable, cruel power-grab. But I think jealousy is often quite rational, and often arises in response to a genuine emotional threat... or deliberate manipulation.

There's another reason, though... I've also noticed that some switch in my brain has flipped, and I've started to ***eroticize*** *jealousy. I occasionally find myself fantasizing about men I care about sleeping with other women, and sometimes the fantasy is hot* ***because*** *I feel mildly jealous. I cannot explain how this happened. It surprised me the first time it happened, believe me. What's really fascinating is that I think* ***the same part*** *of me that eroticizes jealousy, is the part that used to make me feel sick at the thought of my partner*

sleeping with someone else. S&M masochism: the gift that never stops giving!

I think it's important to note here that I didn't become less jealous because I felt like I "should," or because I was told not to be jealous. In fact, I had an early boyfriend who acted like I was a hysterical bitch every time I got jealous... and he made things much worse. With him, I just felt awful when I got jealous; I couldn't get past it. I felt like he was judging me for something I couldn't help; I felt like my mind was fragmenting as I tried to force myself to "think better" without any outside support; and worst of all, I felt like I couldn't rely on him to respect my feelings.

It was the men who treated my emotions like they were reasonable and understandable who decreased my jealousy. It's much harder to be jealous when your partner is saying, "I totally understand," than it is when your partner is saying, "What the hell is the matter with you?" Maybe that's what makes monogamy such an effective jealousy-management tactic: monogamy can be like a great big sign or sticker or button you can give to your partner that says, "I respect your jealousy." Which is not to say that monogamy is always effective for this -- we all know that monogamous people get jealous all the time! (Which only adds to my point that monogamy might be viewed as just one of many tactics, rather than an answer, when jealousy is a problem.)

Now, back to the current article. Jealousy is an incredibly hot-button topic, so I'm nervous about this, but let's focus in on it a little more.

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The Feeling of Jealousy

Jealousy and its cousin, competition, are both things that happen a lot in relationships. Some people are so uncomfortable acknowledging this that they repress those feelings, or ignore the behavior that goes along with them... but I've rarely seen that end well. I believe that some people lack jealousy and competitive urges, but I've also seen a lot of people who feel those things but can't admit it. Not even to themselves.

I dated a guy last year who told me at the start of our relationship that he never got jealous. At first I took him at his word, but I quickly noticed that he changed the subject aggressively when I mentioned past lovers. We had a mutual friend with whom I had a lot of chemistry; when the three of us were together, my boyfriend acted uncomfortable and irritable, and when I specifically acted in ways that made it obvious I was with him -- like by giving him Public Displays of Affection in front of the other guy -- he relaxed.

I sighed internally when I observed this, and I felt frustrated, but wasn't sure how to talk about it without sounding like I was calling him a liar. Fortunately, he brought it up later. "I think I do get jealous sometimes, and I just don't like to think about it because it makes me feel like a bad person," he said, one night while we were making dinner. In that moment, my respect for him skyrocketed. It's hard for people to keep track of themselves like that, and to shift their self-image when confronted with new evidence.

Some people seem to interpret their lovers' jealousy as a sign of love. Hey, I'll admit that I've had moments of being flattered or pleased when my boyfriends show signs of jealousy -- or when they act a little competitive. Sometimes those things are scary,

though... or threatening... or frustrating, like in my example above. It's complicated!

However, I often see those dynamics play out in ways that the participants won't admit, no matter how much evidence comes up. I think it gets especially complicated when people experience jealousy as a sexual thing, a turn-on. Most people have a hard enough time discussing their sexuality in the first place. When you add an ingredient as controversial as jealousy, the potential discussions become that much more combustible.

When I was researching pickup artists for my awesome book *Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser,* I found a number of discussions in that community that praise competitive feelings because they're seen as making the relationship more fun. A lot of these guys say competition among different lovers within open relationships is awesome because it keeps everyone a little uncertain, and encourages them to be "on top of their game." This contrasts drastically with most polyamorous perspectives; in my experience, poly folks see jealousy and competition as things that should be compartmentalized and managed very carefully, rather than encouraged or exalted. For polyamory theorists, a feeling of safety is often the goal, as opposed to a feeling of competition.

And emotional safety is certainly a concern, because jealousy is one of the most intense and overwhelming emotions out there. It's such a hard feeling to sit with and work through. My worst experiences of jealousy felt like I was choking, like I couldn't breathe, like I was sick to my stomach, like I was terribly obsessed, like I couldn't think of anything but the jealousy and how much it hurt. And yet... I've occasionally felt jealousy that was weak, almost nice, where I felt a little twinge of it and turned to my lover and got reassured... and that made me feel more safe, more cared for, more loved.

The bottom line is that people experience jealousy and competitive urges in many different ways. It's important to acknowledge that and honor it. I don't see it as productive to frame things like "jealousy is bad," or "competition is awesome." **I'd much rather frame things like: "Jealousy and competition happen sometimes, and how do we deal with them when they come up so that everyone involved feels comfortable and happy?"**

* * *

The Toolkit

I firmly believe that **the primary tools for dealing with jealousy and competitive urges are honesty, good faith and respect**. If you're feeling jealous, then take a deep breath. (I'm pretty sure that most relationship drama could be avoided if more people took deep breaths.) Hopefully, you're dating someone who you like and trust (if you're not, what's the point?). Remind yourself that this person, who you like and trust, probably is operating in good faith and isn't trying to hurt you. Respect that this person has their own desires, which won't always overlap perfectly with your own. Don't assume that your partner is obliged to do everything you want -- but do be honest about what's hurting you, so you can work it out together.

And, in turn: if your partner is jealous, respect that emotion. Remind yourself that this person, who you like and trust, probably is operating in good faith and isn't trying to control you. Be honest about how your partner's jealousy makes you feel, and think about

ways to reassure your partner while protecting your own needs and boundaries.

The **most stable** relationship formation for dealing with jealousy and competitive urges appears to be monogamy. To be sure, I think people have plenty of other reasons for choosing monogamy. But the relationship tool that seems to work most thoroughly, and most often, and for the most people, is simply... being monogamous.

There are many ways of approaching non-monogamy, but the one I'm most familiar with is polyamory. A lot of polyamorists, though not all, organize their relationships into hierarchies: they have one or more "primary relationships," and then "secondary relationships" and other relationships that don't make it to secondary level. Sometimes a primary partner will have "veto power" -- i.e., if one partner wants to get a new partner, then the primary partner can explicitly block that partner. This seems to help control a lot of jealousy and competitive behavior.

Some poly folks say that they see hierarchies and veto power as "blunt instruments," and that they prefer to negotiate every interaction case-by-case. This sounds fine to me as long as it works for them, of course. But I would offer this: I think that blunt instruments are sometimes the most useful tool for a given project. And in fact, blunt instruments are **more often** useful than finer-tuned instruments. The whole idea of finer-tuned instruments is that they're useful for precise circumstances... but they're also harder to use, and more fragile. Some people don't have the time or inclination to create a whole new toolkit for every individual relationship. Some people will settle for a slightly less precise, perfect relationship in exchange for a more stable one. Sometimes it's simply easier to use a blunter, but more universally effective tool.

I will also add that I have seen **plenty** of polyamorous relationships in which there were **unspoken** hierarchies, and **unspoken** veto power. This resulted in maneuvering that struck me as both underhanded and unnecessary. I've always felt that it would be better for everyone involved if those dynamics were put out on the surface.

Finally, for people who like jealousy and competition.... If S&M has taught me anything, it's that it's quite possible to play with pain and power **within a safe, loving framework**. The key is to compartmentalize the whole process and discuss it openly. If people are into competitive relationships, then okay. If people like jealousy, then okay. But in that case, they really ought to look for partners who share those tastes, and to find ways that they can deal with them openly and honestly.

In S&M, there's a huge emphasis on careful communication tactics -- safewords are the most famous example, but there are plenty of others. There's also a huge emphasis on talking about the S&M encounter and processing it together afterwards; we call this aftercare. If jealousy and competitiveness can be understood as consensual games of pain and power, then I think people who want to play those games would do well to learn about S&M communication tactics. If you're going to have fun making your partner feel an emotion as intense as jealousy, then you might consider giving your partner a safeword.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/05/01/relationship-tools-monogamy-polyamory-competition-and-jealousy/

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EVOLUTION:

[storytime] You Don't Always Know What You're Thinking

I wrote this in late 2010. I have mixed feelings about it now. I think I made important points, but I will also say this: if you don't have a clue what's going on in your head and don't even know where to start, then that can be a bad sign. I think that when people are unhappy, or dealing with situations that are more than they can handle, they often settle into a kind of mental "fog" so they don't have to think about it. (The feminist writer Autumn Whitefield-Madrano has a great article describing how this happens in abusive relationships; she calls it "the fog of abuse.")

Yet at the same time, I do believe that we should consciously make space in ourselves for new feelings to emerge, especially when we're pushing our limits. Self-awareness must include allowing new feelings to emerge at their own pace.

* * *

You Don't Always Know What You're Thinking

In May 2010, I wrote a post called "Am I Evolving Away From Monogamy?" in which I talked about my urge towards polyamory, and my confusion about that urge. I talked about my previous dislike for polyamory, and I talked about how new it is for me to feel like I want to be polyamorous. I talked quite a lot, really, but a week later, I started feeling like I hadn't covered everything... or like I just wasn't correct about some things I'd written.

But how could I be incorrect? I was, after all, writing about **myself** and **my own feeings**. How could I be wrong about what I myself was thinking?

I guess I realized quickly that I'd claimed things about my past self that weren't quite true. That didn't acknowledge my own complexity. For example, I wrote that although I've toyed with polyamory in the past, my most recent poly leanings came up only because I got my heart broken by a gentleman who I sometimes refer to as Mr. Inferno. I theorized that perhaps I'm just scared of commitment. While it is certainly true that I'm not big on commitment these days, I later recalled that actually -- at the beginning of my relationship with Mr. Inferno, I had some doubts about being monogamous. I was monogamous because he was very sure that was what he wanted, but I remember a point when I thought about trying to negotiate something different.

Polyamorous people are stereotyped as being commitment-phobic. I know all about that stereotype -- in fact, I have angrily defended my poly friends from it for years! (Even when I was very fiercely monogamous, I got so mad when people who don't know

anything about polyamory said ignorant things about my poly friends!) Yet I have to watch out for that stereotype's influence on me anyway. When I forgot that I'd considered polyamory with Mr. Inferno, was I being influenced by that stereotype? Or was I just missing Mr. Inferno a lot that day, and wishing I could talk to him, and maybe therefore remembering him as more influential in my life than he actually was? Or... what?

I'm visiting my father right now; we went out to dinner the other night and talked about relationships. I'm quite open about my parents about almost everything -- we don't talk explicitly about our sex lives, but we do have detailed conversations about stuff like polyamory. My dad is not at all attracted to polyamory, and we used to commiserate and theorize about how we just didn't understand polyamory.

Now that I've decided to pursue poly, my dad is puzzled. "I know this is weird," I said to him during dinner, "because we used to be on the exact same wavelength about this," and he nodded. He asks questions, he tries to figure out where I'm coming from -- and they're all questions that I have decent theoretical answers for. Answers include: "Well, of course it's possible to love more than one person at a time. Mothers can love multiple children, kids can love multiple parents, friends can love each other, so why wouldn't it be possible for people to have sexual and emotional relationships with multiple people?" Or: "Jealousy can be managed just fine, as long as partners are communicating well and genuinely care about each others' feelings."

In fact, some of my answers are the **same** theoretical answers that he and I discussed back when we were both steadfastly monogamous. Except this time, I'm giving him those answers from the other side; and yet he can't relate any better to them, this time around.

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I have always spent a very **large** amount of time obsessively analyzing my own emotions, and often writing about them. This has been true since childhood. However, one analytical skill I can always improve is this: knowing when to say, "I'm not sure how I feel about that."

Another important skill is staying on top of the stories I tell about myself, the ideas and memes and images and narratives that I'm trying to match myself to. It seems impossible to track all the influences on my psyche, all the different social and cultural and even biological forces. Where am I under all the programming? It's worth trying to figure it out (even if I'll never know for sure).

I don't always know what I'm thinking. I don't believe that anyone always knows what they're thinking. It's important to acknowledge this, because when people don't acknowledge it, they often simply decide to be something that doesn't quite match up with what they want. Sometimes this works fine -- if the pattern a person chooses to impose on her self can function, then who cares if it's a perfect match? (I mean, arguably, people are always imposing unmatched patterns on our thoughts and selves.) But although this sometimes works fine, there are plenty of times when it doesn't work fine. Or really at all.

I have a section in my sexual communication workshop for maxims -- little slogan-like things. I recently added a new one that I really like: "You don't always know what you're

thinking."

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I've been practicing BDSM for a while, now, and it has been amazing. I've had a lot of very intense sexual experiences and I feel incredibly confident about my sexuality. I feel very far away from my younger self, who realized that she was into BDSM and completely freaked out. However, I used to keep a very detailed (albeit sporadic) personal journal, and this allows me to look into the head of 20-year-old Clarisse. Here's something I wrote only a couple of weeks after I met Richard, my first serious BDSM partner:

On the surface I have a hard time understanding why this has shocked me so much -- the fact that I wanted him to hurt me, the fact that even as I was facing down my demons and crying and incoherent I wanted him to keep biting me, scratching me, bruising me, and God, it was bad, but even now I wish it had been far worse... on some level I want to have been physically scarred. He stopped finally because I started saying "no," and couldn't formulate a coherent answer through my tears when he asked me if I was serious. But, of course, although I was serious, I also didn't want him to stop. Of course. Of course I wanted him to hear me saying no and keep going, to be protesting and overridden. And the reason I couldn't formulate a coherent answer wasn't even that I didn't know the answer was, "Yes, keep going." It was that I knew the answer was yes, and when I faced it I started crying so hard I couldn't speak, and he... sensitively, I guess... decided it was time to stop.

How cliche I am. (God, I'm sounding like some naive ingenue from a random de Sade play or something, just discovering my sexuality or whatever.) How self-conscious. And how humiliated and ashamed. Of all the things I think I expected from myself for this, if it ever came true that this was what I wanted -- I never really actually expected to be ashamed.

What I think is especially interesting about those paragraphs is that I felt a certain recognition for my BDSM identity, I felt a certain inevitability about learning what I needed. It made sense to me. "Of course," I wrote, over and over. And at the same time I acknowledged that I had considered BDSM before -- but that I hadn't really known what that meant, and I'd had no idea how I would feel if I found it. I knew what I was thinking, I knew what I had been thinking, and yet at the same time I didn't know. I had no idea. I was completely confused.

I'm not so confused anymore. These days.... There are a lot of things I don't know, but there are an awful lot of things I do know, too. I have gotten pretty good at knowing what I want, even when it's hard to figure it out. And I have a very good sense of my boundaries.

But I also keep trying to figure out how to expand them. This isn't just true with BDSM. Arguably, my urge to go to Africa and put myself through extreme culture shock was similar to the urge I feel to expand my head with BDSM. Some of the things I want to do with my life and my body and my self seem almost opaque; totally irrational; a little scary -- even to me. I love experiencing and analyzing emotions; experiencing and

analyzing personal connections -- I want to do more of that, even when there are emotional risks. *What's **past** that emotion? What's under my heart? How much can I feel for another person, and in what ways can I manage that? Which part of my mind will catch me if I end up going over the edge? Will anything?*

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And so, even though I have a good sense of my boundaries, I also occasionally have the sense that anything could happen.

This is not always dramatic. Sometimes it is quite tame, like with my current polyamorous leanings. When I was at dinner with my father, he gently expressed concern about how being polyamorous might affect me emotionally. He wasn't trying to tell me what to do -- just that he's having trouble understanding where I'm at. "For me," he said, "sexual relationships encourage emotional attachment," and talked about how he bonds with one person at a time. He added, "I simply find that if my relationship is truly satisfying, I don't want more than one; I can't convince myself to be interested in more than one partner."

I used to feel the same way. Dad knows it, and I know it; we've said these things before. It's not like I don't understand how he feels -- I totally do.

And there's no guarantee that, over the course of experimenting with polyamory, I won't bond with a partner in a way that feels monogamous -- and then get hurt if they won't be monogamous with me. I'm not convinced that I'll feel completely secure as I continue to pursue polyamory. Recently I had one difficult morning that featured two simultaneous breakups, and that was a bit much to deal with! In short, I'm not certain that polyamory is my ideal. But I'm also no longer certain that it's not. And I'm really enjoying trying it out.

Here's the thing: I'm not sure what I'm thinking... **but that's okay**. I know I could end up getting hurt... **and that's okay**. I could get my heart broken: that's what you risk when you experiment with the alchemy of your own emotions, your hormones, your body, your self. But I'm watching myself and being careful and communicating as clearly as I possibly can, and it seems to be going fine. And if poly really doesn't work out for me, I can go back to monogamy.

And hey, at least if I do get my heart broken, it's something else to analyze obsessively and then write about! That's something to look forward to.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2010/12/13/slogan-you-dont-always-know-what-youre-thinking/

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ABUSE:

[theory] Thinking More Clearly About BDSM versus Abuse

I wrote this post in 2011. As I noted in the intro to "The Alt Sex Anti-Abuse Dream Team," other BDSMers have been writing about this more and more, and the discussion is really heating up right now, in 2012. Thomas MacAulay Millar has a particularly good series of posts on the topic, starting with: http://yesmeansyesblog.wordpress.com/2012/03/23/theres-a-war-on-part-1-troubles-been-brewing/

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Thinking More Clearly About BDSM versus Abuse

Years ago, when I first started thinking about BDSM and abuse, I -- like a lot of feminist BDSMers -- was defensive.

We get scared of the accusation that "BDSM is always abuse"... and we're accustomed to accusations from certain feminists such as "those of you who pretend to like BDSM just have Patriarchy Stockholm Syndrome and don't know what you really want"... and often, we're also fighting our own inner BDSM stigma demons. We get angry that our sexual needs are seen as politically problematic, or unimportant.

And so, for a lot of people, our instinctive angle on abuse in the BDSM community is: "Shut up! That's not what's going on!" And that's a problem.

Obviously, I don't think BDSM is inherently abusive! Exploring my personal BDSM desires has given me some extraordinary, consensual, transcendent experiences and connections. I also genuinely believe that BDSM has the potential to control, subvert, and manage power. **BDSM can be a place where people learn to understand bad power dynamics in past relationships; it can be a place where people learn to manage or destroy bad power dynamics in their current relationships; it can be a place where people find glory, self-knowledge and freedom by manipulating their own reactions and responses to power.** The sex theorist Pepper Mint has a great, complicated essay about this called "Towards a General Theory of BDSM and Power". And here's one of my favorite quotations on the matter, from a submissive and former blogger who went by violetwhite:

It's ironic that the most perverse manipulations of power in my life occurred in a past vanilla relationship, where I tolerated tyranny because the normative structure of our relationship obscured the fact that that is what it was.

Still, I've seen things happen in the BDSM community that turned my stomach. Terrible manipulative behavior exhibited by people who have the greatest reputations. Blaming the victim when they try to speak up. Telling "rumor mongers" to shut up when people are trying to talk openly about problematic community members. The BDSM subculture has its own version of rape culture, where "lying bitch" and "drama queen" and "miscommunication" are used against abuse survivors. Miscommunications do happen... but not everything that could be a miscommunication is actually a miscommunication.

Oh yes, rape culture can happen in BDSM just the same way it happens in the "vanilla" mainstream. And there are certainly people in my local community who I would never get involved with, because I do not trust them.

Being defensive about BDSM and abuse won't help; yes, BDSM is stigmatized and stereotyped, but the abuse is still a problem. So after I started blogging, I tried to move past my defensiveness and write more concretely -- to write about what exactly the BDSM community does to work against abuse. One of my first posts on BDSM and abuse was called "Evidence That The BDSM Community Does Not Enable Abuse." It highlighted anti-abuse initiatives within the BDSM community. As I learned more about BDSM and abuse, and my perspective got more nuanced, I wrote a more expansive post called "The Alt Sex Anti-Abuse Dream Team." It covered all the information I'd given in the earlier post, and also talked about how I personally would structure an anti-abuse initiative with alt-sex people in mind.

Looking back now, those posts still strike me as defensive. I was making good points, but I also think that I didn't fully understand where some feminists are coming from when they react negatively to BDSM. This past year, I've learned a lot more about abusive gender-based violence, power, and control. And I've concluded that while BDSM is obviously not equivalent to abuse, we need better theory to describe the difference between BDSM and abuse, and we should try to avoid defensiveness while articulating that theory.

I've written before that one thing I think people can do is try to "start from a position of strength, and seek strength afterwards." The overall point of that maxim is that any given BDSM activity can eventually make all parties feel more supported, more capable, more powerful in the world. That's my ideal end goal; that is what I personally would aim for with my BDSM practice. **Perhaps I might do an intense BDSM scene that makes me feel terrible in the moment -- or for a lot of moments... but I want to be sure it will make me more supported, more capable, more powerful later.**

That's an awfully vague maxim, though, and one that can be different for every person. I may have found a more concrete focus in a 1984 anti-abuse concept -- the Power & Control Wheel:

In 1984, staff at the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) began developing curricula for groups for men who batter and victims of domestic violence. We wanted a way to describe battering for victims, offenders, practitioners in the criminal justice system and the general public. Over several months, we convened focus groups of women who had been battered. We listened to heart-wrenching stories of violence, terror and survival. After listening to these stories and asking questions, we documented the most common abusive behaviors or tactics that were used against these women. The tactics chosen for the wheel were those that were most universally experienced by battered women.

In a BDSM context, a lot of the behaviors listed on the Power & Control Wheel could be part of a consensual encounter -- violence, headgames, name-calling, all kinds of things can be BDSM. But this part, this is important:

MINIMIZING, DENYING AND BLAMING:

** Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously.*

** Saying the abuse didn't happen.*

** Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior.*

** Saying she caused it.*

(The original wheel uses gendered language, but I'd like to note that although abuse is most often perpetrated by men against women, abuse can happen in any kind of relationship and to people of any gender.)

In the brilliant documentary *Graphic Sexual Horror,* which profiles a now-defunct BDSM porn site, there's footage of a scene with a porn model named S4. The dominant partner slaps S4 across the face, and S4 reacts angrily. She says something like, "We didn't talk about that in advance!" The dominant doesn't apologize; he doesn't take her seriously, and he doesn't talk to her carefully or work to calm her down. Instead, the dominant partner snaps: "We can't talk about everything in advance," and aggressively demands to know whether she's ready to continue. This is an example of minimizing, denying, and blaming.

I have some sympathy for his awkward position -- I've made small mistakes as a dominant partner, too, and he's correct that it's impossible to talk about everything in advance. But **the way to deal with those mistakes is by apologizing sincerely and making sure the mistake never happens again**. For example, one of my exes really hated being bitten on the lips, and at one point I bit him on the lower lip. And he called me out, and I said, "I'm sorry," and I put my arms around him to offer comfort; I said, "I won't do it again," and I didn't.

My experience of BDSM relationships is that it's best for there to be both communication ahead of time -- and lots of discussion and processing afterwards. Both partners get to set "hard limits": things they absolutely don't want to do. If one partner has concerns, those concerns get airtime. Both partners acknowledge a role in the proceedings, and blame isn't spread around; even if something goes wrong, the discussion focuses on how to prevent that from happening again rather than making accusations.

And if BDSM is happening, it must be possible to acknowledge it, even if it's subtle. For example, I ran into a partner on the street the other day; he gave me a hug and held me in place for a while, even though I tried to move away. This, my friends, is subtle BDSM. Which was fine with me! But it was only okay because I knew I could call him out on it later and be sure it was acknowledged!

And I did mention it later, and he did acknowledge it, and we both laughed and said it was hot. And if I had told him not to do it, that would have been okay too. And **the fact that I knew I could talk about it, that I knew I could tell him not to do it and he'd listen**... **meant that I also could have declined to mention it, and I would have felt fine**.

Something else worth acknowledging here is time boundaries. If a person is indeed

calling names, controlling what the other person does, etc, then it's often useful for it to be communicated -- and also time-bounded. For example: "You can only call me pathetic during this sexual encounter. Otherwise, please don't."

There are BDSM couples that get rid of time boundaries, and have ongoing BDSM relationship situations; there are also BDSM couples that don't use safewords. I think those relationships require a lot of understanding and care from all parties involved. I've never gone without safewords, but sometimes I go without time-bounding, and when I do, I make very sure that I can trust my partner and communicate well with him. (Thomas MacAulay Millar calls safeword-free BDSM "the advanced class.")

The same group that made the Power & Control Wheel has another useful wheel -- the Equality Wheel. Here's the text of the wheel:

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP:

** Making money decisions together.*

** Making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements.*

NEGOTIATION AND FAIRNESS:

** Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict.*

** Accepting changes.*

** Being willing to compromise.*

NON-THREATENING BEHAVIOR:

** Talking and acting so that she feels safe and comfortable expressing herself and doing things.*

RESPECT:

** Listening to her non-judgmentally.*

** Being emotionally affirming and understanding.*

** Valuing her opinions.*

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY:

** Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work.*

** Making family decisions together.*

RESPONSIBLE PARENTING:

** Sharing parental responsibilities.*

** Being a positive, nonviolent role model for the children.*

HONESTY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

** Accepting responsibility for self.*

** Acknowledging past use of violence.*

** Admitting being wrong.*

** Communicating openly and truthfully.*

TRUST AND SUPPORT:

** Supporting her goals in life.*

** Respecting her right to her own feelings, friends, activities, and opinions.*

All these things ought to be present in a BDSM relationship! Some people do heavy role-play situations where they have specific personas that they don't want to break out of... and they still can make sure that all those elements are included. For example, they can keep simultaneous journals about the relationship, and thereby keep up with each others' feelings and consent without breaking out of their roles.

I also think that the list is especially useful in that **it highlights places where non-consensual control is likely to happen... and therefore, places where BDSMers should be especially careful**. For example, failing to support a partner's life goals would be okay in the middle of an intense BDSM encounter. But afterwards, it might be good to give extra support, just because that can be such an important genuine danger spot.

Just like vanilla people, BDSMers have a lot of unspoken elements of our relationships. For example -- the partner I mentioned earlier, who held me in place when I gave him a hug on the street. We didn't negotiate that particular act ahead of time. But we have an established relationship, and we've done similar things before; I knew that if I wanted to talk about it -- or ask him not to do it -- then he'd listen. And, even more importantly, the rest of our relationship lines up with the Equality Wheel.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/08/02/thinking-more-clearly-about-bdsm-versus-abuse/

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COMMUNICATION:

[theory] What Happens After An S&M Encounter "Gone Wrong"

I wrote this in late 2011. At the time, I didn't mention another factor that makes it important to talk about S&M screwups: we should do it because talking openly about honest mistakes makes it harder for actual abusers to hide in the S&M community. As I note at the end of this piece, sometimes a miscommunication is a real miscommunication, but sometimes it's a "miscommunication" that's covering for abuse. The only way we can

learn to distinguish the two is to talk openly about our screwups. It's an intimidating proposition; for one thing, many outsiders leap to label BDSM as "all abuse, all the time," and none of us wants to give those folks anything that they could use for ammunition. But we have to start talking about this stuff more openly, because the alternative is creating a community where it's much easier to get away with abuse.

In Thomas MacAulay Millar's epic series on abuse in the BDSM community, he's got a whole post dedicated to the various types of miscommunications and mythcommunications that can occur: http://yesmeansyesblog.wordpress.com/2012/04/30/theres-a-war-on-part-5-wallowing-in-the-sl-op/

Otherwise, I hope that this piece is a fairly complete treatment of this incredibly difficult topic.

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What Happens After An S&M Encounter "Gone Wrong"

I've often thought that BDSMers should talk more about our "failed encounters." Sometimes the best way to learn is through "failure," or by looking at others' "failures." But when a BDSM scene "goes wrong," it's often highly personal for everyone concerned. So it's really hard to talk about and really hard to write about -- both for the dominant and submissive partners. This is just like any relationship, really. After all, people rarely talk about their most embarrassing or awkward or otherwise difficult "mistakes made" during vanilla sex, right?

(I use phrases like "failed encounter" and "gone wrong" and "mistakes" with caution, because I think these situations can often be viewed as learning experiences, and therefore they are successful for a lot of purposes! But certainly in the moment they feel like screwups, and a lot of the time they can make the whole relationship very difficult, and I think that most people who have been through them feel as though some kind of failure happened... whether it was a failure of understanding, communication, empathy, caution, or something else.)

Much of the problem, I think, is that people have such a hard time communicating *after* serious miscommunications and mistakes.

The following quotation is from Staci Newmahr's *Playing At The Edge,* an excellent ethnography of the BDSM community. (I've changed a few jargon terms for the sake of accessibility.)

Sophie had been engaged in a long and intimate S&M relationship with Carl, a friend whom she deeply trusted. During the encounter she describes below, Carl changed his approach, and Sophie subsequently felt that Carl was somehow not quite himself. Sophie and Carl never quite recovered from the incident; though they remained friends and tried to do S&M again, it was, according to Sophie, never the same.

Sophie says: "He was very much a rope top. That was his big thing, was tying people up. And he was excellent at tying people up. And our dynamic was always -- I mean, yes, he would absolutely hurt me when the time came for that, but there was also always this element -- even when he was hurting me, it was done in this incredibly, like, touchingly

caring way. And especially when he was tying me up, it was this soothing, wonderful thing."

Sophie continues, "So one day... Carl starts an encounter with me. Carl had decided in his head, from all the things that he's heard me say about how I play with another partner, that that's what I really want from an interaction, in order for it to be the most gratifying and valuable. So we proceeded to have an encounter where Carl was not Carl. And I didn't stop it because it was so like, I couldn't understand what was going on. I couldn't understand why it felt so horrible. And it wasn't that I didn't trust him, because I trust him completely. [...] I just couldn't figure out what the problem is, I felt horrible through the whole thing. And he was so out of touch with me that he wasn't even aware of how horrible I was feeling. The encounter went on for some time... and the second it was over, I... was just, like, you know, traumatized. And he was like, 'Oh my God, what's wrong?' [and] he carried me into the other room. I said something like, 'Where did my Carly go?' and then he started to cry. [...] He's like, 'I was trying to give you this sadistic experience.'"

In Sophie's story, Carl's risk backfires.... The risks were unsuccessful; each ended up emotionally distraught and distant. Ultimately, they sacrificed the relationship. (pages 179-180)

Man, that description is so intense. Let's talk about it.

The first thing worth noting about Sophie's story is that, while she probably had a safeword, she didn't use it: she says that she "didn't stop it." Sometimes, in really confusing S&M scenes, submissives have trouble using their safewords. This does not mean safewords are worthless... but as Thomas MacAulay Millar put it when we wrote about safewords, "Tops can never be on cruise control." Non-verbal signals matter, and if an S&M partner -- top or bottom! -- starts reacting in an unusual way, it's great to check in with them even if they haven't used their safeword. **Safewords are a useful additional way of communicating about sex, but they can't replace all communication.**

Note also how hard the situation was on the top partner, not just the bottom. Carl ended up crying afterwards!

Next, what I find myself wondering is whether Sophie and Carl could have communicated past this incident. Sophie obviously trusted Carl, and presumably he trusted her. Could they have talked it out and had a successful relationship afterwards? It would have been hard, but maybe they could have done it.

I've (rarely) had similar experiences myself -- where boundaries were severely tested, and afterwards it was difficult for both me and my partner to work through it. It can absolutely have an immense impact on the relationship. I write about this a bit in *Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser;* here's a quotation from a section in my book where I'm talking to a dominant partner, with whom I just had such a difficult encounter:

Sometimes, these things happen. One partner pushes a boundary, breaks it; maybe the boundary was unspoken; maybe the dominant misreads signals; maybe the submissive didn't yet realize that the boundary was there. When it comes to S&M, these things can be so dramatic... yet sometimes they're nobody's fault. We find these mental and

emotional blocks, and we call them landmines.

My partner didn't hit the landmine on purpose. He wasn't trying to push me as hard as he did. And I didn't warn him off. So the important question becomes -- how does one deal with such a situation afterwards?

... "I'm sorry," he said. "I'm really sorry. I never want to do that to you again."

"It's okay," I said. "These things happen. But please do be careful. But don't worry...." I trailed off, trying to find words.

It's so hard to know how to talk about this, especially with people who aren't used to discussing S&M. When there's a fuckup, sometimes both sides feel betrayed. The submissive might think: "Maybe I didn't tell you exactly what to avoid, but sometimes it's too much to think about, sometimes it's hard to understand in the moment, sometimes I don't know ahead of time. Okay, so I pushed myself too hard, but I did it because I'm so into you; I did it because, in that moment, I lost track of myself. And anyway, I thought you could read me. I thought you understood me. I thought you knew. You've read me perfectly well before; why not this time? Is it that you don't care?"

Whereas the dominant might think: "Maybe I went too far, but I thought I could trust you to stop me. I thought I could trust you to tell me. I don't want to harm you, I just want to push you; I want to break down walls with you. I want to see your eyes go deep and soft. It's not fair for me to feel like I fucked up, because you fucked up, too. I thought you could take care of yourself. I thought you knew. You've communicated perfectly well before; why not this time? Can I rely on you?"

That particular relationship didn't last, and I think that our most difficult encounter probably affected our trust for each other through the end. Still, I can tell you how we worked on it at the time -- and I can tell you that it felt really good. We just listened to each other. And we both assumed that the other person had good intent. By the end of talking it out -- which admittedly took a really long time; multiple days -- I trusted him more than ever and I felt incredibly close to him.

I've been thinking a lot about classic feminist anti-abuse models, which describe how abusers accomplish abuse. One of the tactics abusers consistently use is Minimizing, Denying, and Blaming their partners. Abusers claim that the abuse didn't happen; they claim it wasn't important; they blame their partners for what happened. A partner who is willing to listen and change will respond openly to criticism and to mistakes: a non-abusive partner will not minimize, deny, or blame.

And those three things are what my ex-partner did not do. He never claimed that our difficult encounter didn't happen; he never put the blame on me; he never insisted that it was no big deal. He didn't even come close to doing those things while we talked it through. He took his emotions and dealt honestly with them, and I did my best to do the same.

Also, in BDSM, we often talk about the concept of "aftercare": that is, what we say and do after a BDSM scene to ground ourselves, bring ourselves back into the world, and connect with our partners. It's important to give careful aftercare after any BDSM

encounter, but if the encounter has been particularly difficult, it's doubly important. I have personally had good experiences leaving Super Intense Conversations like the one I describe above until post-aftercare, when all partners have calmed down and dealt with any immediate emotional responses.

I'm writing vaguely, so here are **some concrete suggestions for things to say during the conversation after a difficult BDSM encounter:**

* "I'm sorry."

* "I still like you and think you're a good person."

* "Do you want to talk about this now? If not now, then let's set a concrete time for later."

* "I'm feeling really vulnerable and confused right now."

* "Why do you think that happened? How were you reading me, and what were you thinking as you responded to me?"

* "How do we feel about this now that we've discussed it, and how can we keep it from happening again?"

* "What have we learned about landmines? Are there any particular words or actions that are definitely off-limits from now on?"

I have one final super important caveat to add here: **Not all "screwups" are actually screwups. Some are just plain abuse.** A human-shaped predator **will** use words like "miscommunication" and "mistake" to cover up what they do. This post is focused on honest errors, but there are dishonest and evil people out there. In particular, if a person "keeps screwing up"... that's a terribly bad sign. **It is not an inherent part of BDSM to feel roiled up and confused and alienated after a BDSM encounter; most BDSMers feel more intimate and connected after successful encounters.**

UPDATE, March 2012: I just found some notes that I took during a workshop about BDSM edgeplay that was run by Mollena Williams in late December. (Edgeplay is a term for BDSM activities that feel especially intense for the participants.) Mollena suggests some questions to ask beforehand:

* Have I seen my partner do S&M before? What did they say or do that made me feel good and comfortable? What did they say that made me have an intense reaction? -- *Pass this information on to the partner ahead of time.*

* What does my gut feeling say about this person? -- *If you have a bad gut feeling about a person, listen to it!* ***Especially*** *for edgeplay.*

Mollena also suggested that when BDSMers play at the edge, they "make a contingency plan" ahead of time... not just for the participants, but for everyone watching, since such activities often take place at dungeons. She noted that such a "contingency plan" might contain:

* Honesty and thoroughness, of course

* Each partner giving each other explicit permission to safeword

* Each partner giving each other explicit permission for "things to not be okay" afterwards

* Having someone on hand that each partner can talk to afterwards -- not necessarily the same person for everyone involved. This person could be an observer, or might know everyone involved in the scene, or might be relatively separate from it all such as a kink-aware therapist, but the really important thing is that this person can give emotional support in every imaginable scenario.

Thanks, Mollena, for the workshop and the thoughts. I've never made such a contingency plan myself, but I definitely think it's worth considering for people who are planning a heavy scene.

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/12/09/what-happens-after-an-sm-encounter-gone-wrong/

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S&M:

[theory] Aftercare or Brainwashing?

I wrote this in 2012.

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Aftercare or Brainwashing?

Yes, it's another article about abuse and S&M, but I'm going to cover a lot more than that. I'll talk about intimacy and bodily reactions and how these things build a relationship -- whether consensual or abusive. And I'll talk about how to deal with them, too.

Last year, I received an email from a woman who wanted to talk about sexual desire that exists alongside real abuse. She has been abused, but she is sexually aroused by S&M, and she struggles with boundaries a lot. She wrote to me:

Here's what destroys you: that some of us are designed to shut down and feel terror and horror and arousal and shame all at the same time, to crumple before horrible people, to feel aroused even as they genuinely destroy you. This is not in any one's best interest. It's not hot, it's not awesome. And yet it's there.

The worst pain for some of us, that makes you want to scream and not exist and makes you want to scream to the heavens that you want to die and escape being in your own body is not that you are afraid he will come back. It's that you are aroused by the possibility that he will. And other than destroying your very self, you can't stop it. It is the

cruelest of design flaws and the worst people understand it and the most compassionate people don't.

*However, the conclusion is **not** that some people want abuse. By definition, abuse is something that destroys you, that leaves you feeling violated and harmed in a way you don't want. And part of that mechanism, that involves the desire for the abuse to continue, is that many of us are designed to want more intimacy once intimacy has been initiated with a person. Many of us don't want to be left.*

And the agony of feeling harmed by being left by someone you never wanted to be there in the first place is confusing and can be debilitating.

No one wants to be harmed in this way. Among abuse survivor communities the arousal involved in abuse situations is often called "body betrayal," but this doesn't seem to encompass how deep the desires can be for some people. At the root, the desires are often the same desires that fit into normal healthy intimate relationships. To be loved, to have an ongoing interaction, to be seen and understood at the root of all your emotion, to be taken sexually and feel the pleasure of another enjoying your sexual arousal. But these emotions have been exploited and manipulated for the gain of others.

For some number of people who have experienced abuse, the greatest split within the self does not simply come from how horrific the acts themselves were but from the feelings of desire and pleasure that can happen in human beings even during horrific unwanted acts. For some of us, BDSM can be a safe way to explore unpacking some of this desire and how these arousal patterns got mixed up with horrific things -- or were already hooked up to horrific things and that pre-existing fact was exploited by a harmful person. And for some of us, taking that out and playing with it may not be a necessary part of recovery at all.

But simply knowing this -- the fact that your arousal and pleasure systems can be activated by harmful people is ok -- it does not mean you want it, it does not mean that it was good for you, or that anyone should have treated you in that way. That can be the greatest healing in and of itself.

I want to thank her for allowing me to publish her words. Her description is so far from how I usually discuss or experience S&M; and yet I see connections, too, and people rarely discuss those connections.

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Aftercare: Intimacy Within Positive and Consensual S&M

A while back, a study came out that established that a consenting, positive S&M experience increases a couple's intimacy afterwards. I cite that study all the time, but I still find its existence kinda absurd; I mean, they could have just asked us how it felt. On the bright side, if S&M is being studied by Real Researchers, it's a sign that S&M is becoming more widely accepted. Yet for all its hormone level measurements and mood surveys, I didn't feel like the study got anywhere near the heart of S&M and how S&M creates such extraordinary intimacy. Why would it? Studies are science, and aftercare is art.

I've previously defined aftercare as "a cool-down period after an S&M encounter, which often involves reassurance and a discussion of how things went." That's a decent quick definition, but there's a lot more to it. Bodily violence sometimes creates a mental malleability and vulnerability that can be used in good ways... but also in terrible ways. I see aspects of this in competitive sports, especially the ones that involve fighting and hurting other people very directly. (Have you ever seen that phenomenon where two guys fight each other and then become Best Friends right afterwards?)

Being together with an S&M partner during aftercare can be used to free people, to make them feel amazing and establish extraordinary intimacy. But it can hurt people too; it can hurt them terribly.

Aftercare, like subspace, is one of the most mysterious parts of S&M. Like subspace, a lot of S&Mers describe aftercare in nigh-mystical language. One excellent page of aftercare advice begins by saying:

Aftercare is the last act of the SM drama. It is the culmination, the pulling together of all loose ends, the finishing touches, the final communion between sharers of the SM ritual, the phase where the participants formally give the fantasy scene a context in everyday reality. Its technical purpose is to transition both players from the elevated states created in a scene [i.e., an S&M encounter] back into normalcy, returning to the motor control and awareness they will need to drive home once the scene is over. But as any good SM practitioner will tell you, it's much more than that. It is the time after the action when the participants come together in mutual affirmation that something special was created and shared. It is when affection and closeness is offered and sought. It is, at very least, the proper time to express thanks to the person who has shared this tiny segment of your life with you. It can be, and often is, the most beautiful part of a scene, and it is part of the scene. To skip it altogether is as rude as having dinner at a friend's house and then bolting once you've eaten your fill.

Aftercare is not always extraordinary, the same way S&M isn't always extraordinary. Not everyone wants or needs aftercare, although I've always felt that if you "don't do aftercare," that's something to warn your partner about ahead of time.

I guess from the outside, aftercare often looks like a combination of snuggling and chatting and giggling -- sometimes, crying and/or comforting. From the inside, though, aftercare can feel like... a shot of pure empathy. Blissful connection. Words like "basking" and "glowing" and "transcending" come to mind. As someone said to me when I was first getting into S&M: "Very few S&Mers actually enjoy giving or receiving pain. What they like is where pain gets them."

The Practicalities of S&M Intimacy

I believe that S&Mers should try very hard to put boundaries around our S&M interactions; we should work to communicate carefully, and compartmentalize what we do. Consent, and well-communicated boundaries, are the factors that separate S&M from abuse. I talked about those boundaries in "Thinking More Clearly About BDSM versus Abuse," and I also talked about them in "What Happens After an S&M Encounter 'Gone Wrong.'" I've written about S&M communication tactics that enable communication and

boundary-setting, from safewords to checklists to keeping simultaneous journals.

Aftercare is part of that boundary-setting process, but a lot of the time, people have a hard time thinking or speaking clearly right after S&M. Some people become incredibly non-verbal, or vague and confused, or giggly, or all of the above. For this reason, some people include later follow-ups (like a next-day phone call) under the umbrella of "aftercare" -- the goal is to allow the post-S&M time to be calming and un-challenging, and then talk things through when everyone's head is clearer. Processing things thoroughly after an S&M encounter is really important, especially if the people involved are planning to do it again. It's important for two reasons: it helps the people involved get a better sense of what they want and don't want; and it helps them learn more about how to communicate with their partners.

Recently, I was privileged to give a partner his first heavy S&M experience. Afterwards, when he was coming out of it, he said to me: "No one has ever touched me so deeply, so fast before." I lay with him, listening. I'm pretty sure I did a good job helping him pick up the pieces, but when I try to figure out **what** I did, I have trouble describing it.

So I wouldn't know how to give a step-by-step "how to" for aftercare, but I can offer some thoughts. For one thing, the person who was dominant during the encounter is usually the person who runs the aftercare, too. When I'm in the dominant position, the message I try to get across during aftercare is along these lines: "I'm here, I'm listening, I care about you, you're safe with me, and you can take all the time you need."

In the submissive position, I'm often too busy processing to think carefully about what message I'm getting across to my partner. But sometimes I do get the sense that he's confused or anxious or needs some feedback, at which point I try to get across a message along these lines: "I care about you and I'm so grateful to you for taking on that power just now. If you need to talk, we will do that when I'm more alert. But for now, let's please just be here together and establish our closeness."

And when I'm switching -- or when the power dynamic is otherwise unclear -- well. I guess I try to get across a combination of those messages.

The Boundaries of S&M Intimacy

I used to be more willing to do S&M "on the first date," when I barely knew my partner. That's changed for two reasons. Firstly, I've become much warier of doing S&M without a strong foundation to the relationship. I've been lucky, because my partners have treated me so well, even the casual ones. (As more stories of S&M and abuse become public, I realize more and more how lucky I've been.) But I don't ever want to be in a position where I do intense S&M and I can't rely on my partner afterwards; and the best way to build a reliable foundation is to spend lots of time together before we get into anything deep.

Secondly, I've become more aware of how quickly S&M can affect me. It's entirely possible to do excellent, intense S&M with someone I can't trust. And if that happens, then boom: I'll be intensely bonded to him, yet unable to trust him. It's not a good place to be. There are some kinds of S&M that feel light or even impersonal to me, but when I do things that feel intense... the bond forms so fast, and it's so incredibly strong. I swear it's a

chemical thing. My body will crave him beyond words, even if my brain knows he's a terrible idea.

I once heard about a woman who won't allow herself to have orgasms during casual sex, because she knows the orgasm itself will bond her to her partner. I don't experience orgasms that way. But when a partner really puts me under with S&M, pulls me in deep, and then he gives me aftercare while I surface? That's where I fall in love.

I've heard of polyamorous S&M relationships in which the primary relationship disallows S&M with non-primary partners. I can certainly understand wanting to reserve that for the primary relationship. I've also heard of polyamorous S&M relationships in which the partners can do S&M with outside partners... but won't allow aftercare with outside partners. I can understand that even better.

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Brainwashing: Intimacy Within Abuse

In late 2010, I cross-posted an article about an intense S&M experience to the blog *Feministe.* In the article, I included these words:

There it was. I felt the tears building, gasps torn from my throat, I felt myself starting to fall apart and reform: around him, around his guidance and force and demands. Almost unable to think. Until finally he relented and said my name, and said softly, "Come back," and ran his hand reassuringly down my hair.

There it was: the reason I want it so much.

In response, a commenter named FormerWildChild wrote:

For some of us, the idea of being hit by another person makes us want to jump up and run out of our skin. It seriously wigs us out. It is not a moral judgment; is a true phobia for another person. It reminds me of when we were at the un-civilized end of Grand Canyon with our children. All that stood between my kids and certain death was inches of loosely packed sand. When we were done sightseeing, I discreetly walked behind the van and threw up until I could breathe again.

I had that same terrified feeling when I read about your account of your last session. I wanted to go wrap a blanket around you, hold you in my arms and feed you tea and cookies until I can finally breathe again.

And my fear is not because I fail to really "get" what you experience. It comes from an absolute recognition of what you describe.

I have experienced what you described at the end of your BDSM session, the breaking and reforming of yourself around someone. I have felt exactly what you are talking about, that feeling of finally letting go, of surrendering, and the other person sensing that you are finally there, and then stopping. I have felt the sweetness of those moments of post-thrashing closeness when tenderness seems to hover in the room. I know the feeling of intense closeness which can follow the next day. The air is filled with a cathartic cleanness, the experience of inflicting pain and of receiving pain has cleared the air better than any southern thunderstorm. I can even imagine coming to crave that feeling

in the way that you describe.

But I experienced all of those feelings as a child. What you described is precisely what it feels like when an abuser truly lets loose and keeps going until "it" breaks, until there is that moment of catharsis for both the beaten and the person doing the beating. In my experience, those relationships are like playing along the end of the Grand Canyon: people fall in, and they die.

Now, I am willing to believe two things: one, it is possible that my mother and other abusers are actually engaged in a form of BDSM rape when they beat the people that they love. Just as sex is the overpowering and taking of something that should be beautiful and intimate, so beating a loved one to catharsis might just be the same sort of thing. Perhaps that is something that abuse experts should look at.

I am also willing to believe that you have an invisible fence as you play along the edge of your own personal Grand Canyon. I am willing to believe that you know how to be there without falling into the abyss. But if that is the case -- that it is safe for you out there, and that I simply need to accept that. Then I will ask you to accept the fact that I will need to go behind the van and toss my lunch.

At first I was frustrated by that comment, because all I could see was someone saying "I want to throw up when I read about your sexuality," and I was like: grrr. But now I look at that comment, and I see such important points, points that are utterly crucial to the developing language that distinguishes S&M from abuse.

I will say first that I have never personally survived that kind of abuse. But I have received emails from people asking me to write about this, over and over, and I hope that I can help those folks by offering my thoughts. I have also spoken to some abuse experts who tell me that, behind closed doors, they do talk about this: they discuss how the existence of real desire, real catharsis, and real intimacy within an abusive context can look terrifyingly similar to descriptions of S&M encounters.

Rape survivors of all genders sometimes experience physical pleasure and even orgasm while being assaulted. A paper about this was published in the 2004 *Journal of Clinical Forensic Medicine,* and there are plenty of first-person accounts around the Internet. Here's an explicit and tremendously saddening quotation from one of them:

I kept physically fighting him off and telling him that though I respected him as my pastor and as a father figure I wanted him to stop. He pushed me, tore my clothes and raped me. ... The pain was incredible as they were very rough and forceful. After what seemed like forever I blacked out. I remember the pastor shaking me hard and slapping me across the face. He then shoved down my throat ten or so Excedrin (a medicinal mixture of pain killer and caffeine) so that I would stay awake.

One of the most disturbing things that happened that night is that I had an orgasm. Despite years of marriage, it was my first orgasm ever. It really confused me. I thought some part of me must be mentally sick to have experienced the pleasure of an orgasm during this horrific trauma.

Here's the thing about consent: **orgasm is not consent**. Physical pleasure is only the

body's reaction to certain types of stimulation. Also: sexual desire is not consent. And **love isn't consent, either**. If I feel sexual desire for my partner, and my body feels good when he touches me, and I love him, yet I make it clear that I don't want to have sex right now... then he's still violating my consent if he has sex with me. (Obviously, if I want to say "no" and mean "yes," then it's my responsibility to negotiate that ahead of time and set a safeword.)

In short: **There can be pleasure, desire, and even love existing alongside real abuse. But that doesn't mean it's not abuse.** This is as true with S&M as it is with non-S&M sex.

I once spoke to a person who referred to himself as an abuser, who told me that he'd read descriptions of S&M aftercare, and that he saw his own tactics within them. He told me when he thought about it, he had always considered it to be "brainwashing."

And I can see it. That's the scary part. I really can see it. I can believe that when we have powerful S&M experiences, we tap into the same parts of our brains that could otherwise be used for psychological manipulation and destruction. S&M shows us how to create and utilize enormous mental vulnerability through violence... and vulnerability can always be abused. In the literature exploring the cycle of abuse, people often write about the "reconciliation phase," in which the abuser is all sweetness and light to their victim; I can't help but wonder how much of the "reconciliation phase" could be recognized as non-consensual aftercare. How much of an abuser's power over their victim might come from the mental malleability that cautious S&Mers learn to respect?

This does not mean that our bodies are broken. The woman whose words I published at the top of this article called it "the cruelest of design flaws and the worst people understand it and the most compassionate people don't." But we don't have to perceive this as a flaw -- it's not a flaw any more than orgasms are a flaw. Some S&M instructors compare S&M mental states to "altered states," like being drunk; there's nothing wrong with being drunk, but people should be careful with alcohol. Our bodies are instruments with certain powers and vulnerabilities that we must respect.

This power and vulnerability is one of the biggest reasons I do the writing that I do. Because although they're invisible, I do have a sense of the fences that FormerWildChild talked about when she commented at *Feministe:* the fences that keep S&Mers from falling into the Grand Canyon of abuse. Those invisible fences around the canyon are constructed from self-awareness, self-esteem, respect, and consent.

Building Fences Around The Canyon

How do we build fences around the canyon? We build them by seeking to understand our desires, and talk openly with our partners, and respect our partners' limits. So I write about communication and self-examination and learning to value my boundaries... and I hope it will help people learn what it means to play at the edge, rather than falling into the canyon.

This is scary, loaded, complicated territory. I certainly don't have all the answers. But I have ideas on how we might begin finding answers from here.

Firstly, S&Mers and feminists both need to be aware of this emotional and biological phenomenon. It can create a sense of overwhelming intimacy with unexpected partners. And it can be used as a tool by abusers who groom relationships that started consensually into abusive relationships.

Secondly, we must keep talking about communication and boundary-setting. An important part of this discussion is openly discussing what happens when well-intentioned S&Mers screw up, and how we deal with that. Again, I wrote about that in "What Happens After an S&M Encounter "'Gone Wrong.'" Thomas MacAulay Millar has a great post that lists the mistakes that can happen within S&M. He mentions, for example, that sometimes there are genuine physical "technical" errors; sometimes people also hit "landmines" or unexpected psychological problems (I also covered landmines in my post). Talking openly about screwups makes it harder for abusers to claim that they "just screwed up."

Thirdly, within our communities, we need to spread the word -- especially to people who we believe might be inexperienced or vulnerable or otherwise in a position to have this used against them.

* * *

After June 16, 2012, this can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/06/16/sm-aftercare-or-brainwashing

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COMMUNICATION:

[theory] Feminist S&M Lessons From the Seduction Community

This was originally split into three parts and published in 2011 at GoodMenProject.com. Obviously, it covers some territory that I also cover in Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser, *but the book is much chattier and has more fun anecdotes. Also, you should totally buy the book. Okay, I'll stop advertising it now.*

* * *

Feminist S&M Lessons From the Seduction Community

There is an enormous subculture devoted to teaching men how to seduce women. Within the last half-decade or so, these underground "pickup artists" have burst into the popular consciousness, aided by Neil Strauss's bestselling book *The Game* and VH1's hit reality show *The Pick-Up Artist.*

Pickup artists -- also known as the "seduction community" -- exchange ideas in thousands of online fora, using extensive in-group jargon. One pickup artist site lists "over 715 terms, and counting." There are pickup artist meetups, clubs, and subculture celebrities all over the world. There are different ideological approaches and theoretical schools of

seduction. Well-known pickup artist "gurus" can make millions of dollars per year: they may sell books; they may sell hours of "coaching"; they may organize training "bootcamps" or conventions with pricy tickets; they may run companies full of instructors trained in their methods. The community even generates its own well-thought-out internal critiques.

I am a sex-positive feminist lecturer and writer. I write primarily about my experiences with sadomasochism, but I have a general interest in sexuality. I first encountered pickup artists when smart ones started attending my educational events and commenting on my blog.

Some aspects of pickup artistry are hugely problematic; many parts of the community showcase and encourage misogyny. While exploring the PUA jungle, I observed things that turned my stomach and brought tears to my eyes. On the other hand, I had to admit that some pickup artist perspectives were very interesting. Some had fascinating insights about gender theory and social power. I also felt drawn by their exploits. Learning seduction, and watching hypothetically-dazzling Casanovas run a courtier-like game, sounded like an extremely fun way to spend my time.

I started my journey by talking to a few pickup artists and reading their fora. By the end, I had given a lecture at a seduction convention, and I had decided against developing my own coaching business. Today, I can offer a quick synopsis of my own history, and why I became so interested in PUAs. I will break down some elementary distinctions among the men of the seduction community. Finally, I will offer a few PUA-influenced thoughts on feminist goals.

* * *

I was an awkward little bookworm of a child, but at least I was creative. I liked to draw, invent games, and run amateur social experiments. When I was in high school, most of my friends were on the Internet; I did not date a real-life boyfriend until college. I was inevitably teased by my peers, but even when treated well, I rarely engaged with the social hierarchies around me. I had difficulty grasping how social mechanics were "supposed" to work. A lot of things seemed obvious to other people that were not obvious to me.

For example, in sixth grade, a female friend of mine teased me about flirting with a boy. "What was I doing?" I asked. "Come on, you were flirting!" she responded. While I thought I almost understood what she meant, I was unsure -- so I set out to poll everyone I knew about what constitutes "flirting." Responses were inconsistent. One person said, very definitely: "Giggling." Others cited examples such as "intense looks" or "making jokes."

By the end of this experiment, I concluded that no one seemed able to explain "flirting" in terms of consistent behaviors; there were few commonalities in my final list. From what I could tell, flirting could only be explained in terms of invisible interpersonal dynamics. I found this both entertaining and frustrating.

I sometimes wonder what would have become of me if the modern pickup artist community had existed back then, and I had discovered it. PUAs devote a lot of time to

understanding seduction in terms of observed behaviors. They have terms for social tactics that run the gamut from creating rapport, to encouraging trust, to building sexual tension, to shifting social power. But although the purpose of these social tactics is to manipulate emotion, the tactics are typically described as concretely as possible. Some PUA coaches provide long memorized "routines," but it is more common to talk about particular social actions or broader strategies.

One famous PUA tactic is called the "neg." "Neg" stands for "negative hit," and one site defines a neg as "a remark, sometimes humorous, used to point out a woman's flaws." Like many PUA terms, the deeper meanings and usage vary from PUA to PUA -- but there is an especially dramatic range of meanings with "neg."

Some PUAs see negs as friendly teasing: a way for the PUA to show that he is paying attention to the girl, without appearing needy or overeager. I can offer a cute example of this approach from my own life. I was sitting in a cafe with a former PUA, and he gazed deep into my eyes.

"Wait a minute," he said slowly. "Are your glasses held together by epoxy? It looks like you had to repair them at the corners."

"Yeah," I admitted.

He grinned. "Everything about you just screams 'starving artist,' doesn't it."

This made me laugh for quite a while. I think it worked because he understood that I have chosen (for now) to be a broke writer -- but he also recognized the tension I feel about that choice. So this gentleman was demonstrating that he correctly discerned my priorities; that he is not bothered by a choice that makes me feel self-conscious; and that he is confident enough to tease me.

Also, at a moment when I thought he might compliment my eyes, the former PUA shook up my expectations by breaking the romantic pattern. Often, effective flirting involves offering the right mixture of confidence plus charming novelty plus paying attention.

Some PUAs see negs more strategically, as a way of passing a woman's "tests" or breaching her indifference. They argue that this is necessary for women who are very high-status, very beautiful, etc. They argue that some women develop a kind of immunity to compliments, and that some women actively prefer feisty, faux-adversarial flirting. Most PUAs only advocate using negs on women who meet a certain "minimum" level of attractiveness, or who seem particularly feisty. Neil Strauss, a famous PUA and author of the bestseller *The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists,* once wrote that:

When you give a woman who's often hit on a generic compliment, she will usually either ignore the remark or assume you're saying it because you want to sleep with her.

When you tease her and show her that you're unaffected by her beauty and demonstrate that you're out of her league -- and THEN let her work to win you over and ultimately REWARD her with your approval, she will leave that night feeling good about herself. Like something special happened and she connected with somebody who appreciates her for who she REALLY is.

In short, a neg will buy you the credibility you need to sincerely compliment her later.

That said, I don't necessarily advocate negs; they are in many ways a temporary patch to stick onto your personality while you learn to possess real confidence and strength of character.

Although this is a manipulative approach, it is not inevitably harmful. It also is not limited to the sphere of sexual relationships; humans often pretend not to care what other people think, and consistently attempt to be taken seriously by others. Additionally, for many people, flirting involves a certain amount of strategic ambiguity and plausible deniability, and negs are a useful tactic for that kind of game. Not everyone likes playing such tacit and confusing games, but many people do.

However, this is all cute and mild compared to how some PUAs talk about negs: some cite the neg specifically as a tactic to make the girl feel bad.

A well-known PUA who goes by the name of Tyler Durden once wrote that: "You use self-esteem negs to lower the target's self-esteem, and crave your attention to re-validate herself." Similarly, an especially pitiless PUA blogger who is sometimes described as "the Darth Vader of PUAs" writes that:

The best negs are those which are conceivably meant as compliments, but which linger in her psyche for hours afterward, undermining her self-conception and encouraging her to qualify herself to you [i.e. encouraging her to explain why she's worth your time].... [A neg] infiltrates a girl's subconscious so that she spends more mental energy analyzing her worth than she does analyzing yours.

One commenter adds to the above blogger's words that: "So long as you have a woman auditioning for you, power remains where it belongs -- squarely in your pocket."

In other words, a person who feels anxious and unworthy will be easier to control. These cruel PUAs have learned the same lesson as thousands of people in abusive relationships.

Here is an especially instructive quotation from the comments on "Darth Vader's" blog: "[Women] really are insipid, vapid airheads. If it wasn't for the pussy, there would be a bounty on them." That statement is interesting not just because of its hatred but because of its fear. After all, no one puts a bounty on targets that are not dangerous. The most misogynist corners of the PUA subculture not only discuss ways to aggressively manipulate women; they also paint women as selfish, deceitful and hazardous.

The various approaches to negging highlight both the different shadings of opinion across the subculture, and a particularly important distinction among PUAs themselves. Some of these men genuinely do enter pickup artistry out of a desire to connect to women. As one PUA told me, "When I first looked at PUA stuff, I was like, 'This is so sleazy and gross.' But I'd never had a girlfriend, and I kept telling myself, 'Dude, you are lonely and miserable and you don't want to die alone.'" On the other hand, many PUAs become PUAs because they want unilateral power and control over women -- and many PUAs attempt to justify this through narratives and jokes that encourage fear and anger against women.

* * *

Aside from the "connection" vs. "control" distinction, there is also a distinction between PUAs who are seeking what is essentially self-help, and those who aren't.

The PUA concept that best illustrates this is "inner game." Inner game is, essentially, genuine confidence and sense of purpose. It contrasts with "outer game" -- i.e., the things a PUA says and does to attract women. A "neg" would count as "outer game," for example.

Most successful PUAs reach a point where they decide that, in the words of one coach: emotionless "sport-fucking kinda sucks." (Some PUAs start at this point, but that is a bit unusual.) They conclude that it's time to pull back from the game; to seek longer-term or more emotionally connected sex; to examine their priorities; and to discover interests aside from picking up new girls. Finding themselves in this way can be described as "inner game." The men who discuss inner game often talk about developing their own businesses, exercising regularly, keeping a healthier diet, accepting their own vulnerabilities, pursuing hobbies, and improving their connections with people of all genders.

Most PUAs also realize that women respond well to genuine confidence and sense of purpose. This could be seen as ironic: notwithstanding the fact that "inner game" emphasizes self-improvement, the concept is still centered on seducing women. However, despite the fact that "inner game" is centered on gaming ladies, its ultimate result is usually to encourage PUAs to think about what they really want from life. PUA coach Mark Manson once wrote that, "You don't end up in the Pick Up Artist community unless you are incredibly unhappy or unsatisfied about something. It may be conscious, it may be unconscious. It may be short-term, or it may be deep-seated and long-term." He later wrote to me by email that: "This is a giant self-help community in disguise." I also once interviewed Neil Strauss himself, who said he hoped that his famous book *The Game* could become "the beginning of a men's self-help movement -- because self-help isn't emasculating anymore if you're doing it to get laid."

Interestingly, Neil Strauss also told me that he agreed with feminism in many ways, and said things like: "We still are a patriarchal society." Many feminists felt that my interview with him was full of problematic statements, and his words were picked apart by feminist readers. I do not disagree with many feminist critiques of what Strauss said -- but considering where Strauss was coming from, his words were extraordinarily supportive of feminism. One feminist commented to me that, "I don't understand why you're not more critical of this guy." In response, it is worth noting how an anti-feminist writer responded to Strauss's words:

Whether Strauss is an ignorant fool or an opportunist liar who wants to appease feminists in order to avoid negative feedback is anyone's guess, but if his words are anything to go by, we can safely assume that the best-known public advocates of Game are perfectly OK with parroting feminist dogma.

For the few, mild pro-feminist statements Strauss made, some PUAs deride him as either an "ignorant fool or an opportunist liar." (Others hurled particularly misogynist insults such as "mangina.") This is both a demonstration of how vitriolic PUA anti-feminist sentiment can become, and an example of the social shaming that sometimes leads men

in the PUA community to avoid associating themselves with anything resembling feminist thought or woman-friendly perspectives.

Clearly, many men view pickup artistry as a kind of therapy. The community can be a support group for self-confidence and self-improvement. Unfortunately, many corners of the seduction community are also a support group for virulent misogyny. Some feminists argue that any man who seeks self-help through the seduction community is effectively embracing misogyny, because so much of the community is misogynist. However, some PUA students could be interpreted as seeking self-help from the only avenue they see as acceptable, if they are coming from a culture that usually defines self-help as un-masculine or anti-masculine. Again, note that Neil Strauss said: "self-help isn't emasculating anymore if you're doing it to get laid."

The most confusing thing about misogyny among PUAs is that although some more-misogynist PUAs separate themselves consciously from non-misogynist PUAs, and vice versa, the groups still overlap a great deal. Even PUA-influenced men who prioritize non-misogyny, and are willing to talk to a feminist writer like me, often seem to soak up misogynist ideas from the rest of the subculture. At one point, I talked to one PUA I thought was committed to being non-sexist... until he expounded quite seriously upon how his favorite PUA blogger thinks the USA would be better off if women did not vote. One goal of my book, *Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser,* is to draw clearer lines: to give examples of PUAs and PUA approaches that seem more abusive or inclined towards harm, as opposed to approaches that seem mostly playful, harmless or even positive.

* * *

Although I want to cry when I see statements like, "If it wasn't for the pussy, there would be a bounty on women," I try not to let it distract me from some insights emerging from the seduction community. By focusing empirically and pragmatically on the process of sexual escalation, PUAs are approaching gender norms in a way that many people -- including feminists -- usually do not. Also, I can relate to some PUAs because some PUAs have the same history of social anxiety that I do.

I have another personal reason for feeling uncomfortable painting PUAs as "the enemy." When feminists criticize how PUAs approach sexuality, I have mixed feelings, because I myself am known for sexual desires that are unpopular with some feminists. As I grew out of being an awkward little bookworm nerd, as I began dating and exploring my sexual needs, I started to understand my sexuality as being heavily involved with BDSM.

Consensual BDSM is a heavily stigmatized type of sexuality, although some sexologists have argued that it might be viewed as a sexual orientation. Many feminists marginalize BDSM just as much as the rest of society does -- or more. Famous German feminist Alice Schwarzer once said: "Female masochism is collaboration," and a recent history of *Ms. Magazine* quotes a co-founding editor who recalls that:

I threatened to leave over a manuscript by a woman who was a former editor of ours who was writing about why she was a masochist and trying to make it an okay choice. I would rather leave than work for a magazine that published that. And we didn't publish it.

As a result, notwithstanding my considerable feminist writing and activism, I live in fear of my "feminist card" being revoked because of my BDSM identity.

Yet, simultaneously, my practice of BDSM has greatly informed my feminist understanding. Rape and consent are both very important feminist issues, and much of the BDSM community obsessively examines sexual consent. The dominant BDSM community "mantra" is "SSC: Safe, Sane, and Consensual." Some people debate whether another "mantra" would be better, but I have never heard of someone removing the "consensual" part. Indeed, the ways many BDSMers think of sexual consent overlap dramatically with the ways that many feminists think of it.

Safewords are a famous and high-profile example of careful BDSM communication tactics. They are specific code words that any participant can use to stop the sexual action at any time. Safewords are important in a context where one partner might want to scream "No!" or "Please don't!" or "Mercy!" with no intention of actually stopping the action.

Safewords serve another, stealthier, but equally important function: they bring home the idea that consent is a continuously changing process. Consent is part of the ongoing sexual negotiation that takes place between two people. Here, BDSM consent ideas overlap heavily with feminist consent ideas. For example, one article by high-profile feminist Jaclyn Friedman pushes back against dominant conceptions of consent by stating that "consent is not a lightswitch." As Friedman writes:

Sexual consent isn't like a lightswitch, which can be either "on," or "off." It's not like there's this one thing called "sex" you can consent to anyhow. "Sex" is an evolving series of actions and interactions. You have to have the enthusiastic consent of your partner for all of them. And even if you have your partner's consent for a particular activity, you have to be prepared for it to change.

Safewords are, effectively, a constant reminder that "you have to be prepared for [consent] to change."

BDSMers and feminists tend to teach explicit, straightforward verbal sexual communication -- in contrast to the seduction community, which typically teaches non-verbal or playfully tacit sexual communication. For example, the seduction community has an extensive array of discussions about how to initiate flirtatious touching, which PUAs refer to as "kino." The seduction community also places a strong emphasis on developing skill at reading a social situation without asking exactly what is going on; if a PUA is good at understanding implicit social signals, he is described as "calibrated."

For BDSMers and feminists, the sexual consent territory continues to overlap after safewords. Huge factions, if not majorities, within both groups have concluded that the best way to encourage consent is not merely to encourage people to understand that they can withdraw consent at any point -- but to encourage open communication and self-knowledge about sex.

Among feminists, an example of this approach is Jaclyn Friedman's brand-new book *What You Really, Really Want: The Smart Girl's Shame-Free Guide to Sex and Safety*. *Salon's* Tracy Clark-Flory notes in an interview with Friedman that:

The book is filled with writing exercises that prompt readers to reflect on everything from body image to sexual assault. It's essentially a guide to writing one's own personal sexual manifesto.

Among BDSMers, an example of this approach is the multi-page checklists that some BDSMers use. (I already wrote about this in my piece "Sex Communication Tactic Derived From S&M: Checklists," reprinted earlier in this book; just in case you haven't read it, I'll briefly describe them.) Checklists are essentially lists of every conceivable BDSM-related act; each act on the checklist looks something like this:

FLOGGING -- GIVING _____ O O O O O

FLOGGING -- RECEIVING _____ O O O O O

Each partner rates each entry by filling out 1-5 bubbles, with 1 darkened bubble meaning "Not interested" and 5 bubbles meaning "I crave this!" This type of explicit communication is both an excellent way to help partners understand each other's desires -- and to help partners understand each other's boundaries. In a way, this sort of thing could be seen as "Master Class" consent communication.

This was the context whence I emerged when I started investigating pickup artistry. I am a feminist, but I'm a flavor of feminist with a troubled history within the movement. I am an advocate for explicit communication, but I believe that no aspect of consent should be ignored, and I am concerned that many feminists and BDSMers give a certain unwarranted privilege to explicit verbal communication over implicit or non-verbal communication.

People seem likely to develop a preference for explicit communication if it seems more necessary. For instance, many BDSMers develop a preference for explicit communication because our desires are unusual and precise, and complicated words will help us get what we want. Feminists develop the same preferences because explicit communication is the clearest way to ensure sexual consent. Accordingly, some people attempt to promote explicit sexual communication by saying: *We should make it necessary.*

Here's an example exchange from the comments on a thoughtful feminist BDSM blog. A male commenter asks:

I once had an argument with a very good female friend of mine about kissing. She was perturbed about a date who asked her if he could proceed to kiss her. She said the man should just know. It should be instinctual and u lose the moment as soon as u ask. I said that was bs, the first move is one of the most nerve wracking things, the very fact that he asked shows his politeness and tact and frankly a lack of presumptuousness.... What do you think? What's the line between politeness and passivity?

The feminist blogger, an intelligent and awesome lady who goes by the name Holly Pervocracy, responds that:

I don't say this very often, but "you lose the moment as soon as you ask" girls really are ruining it for the rest of us.

As far as I'm concerned, they can go without ever being kissed until they wise up.

However, I think (or would like to think? augh) that most girls are not like that, and that you should not plan for girls to be like that. I'd definitely rather offend someone by asking than offend them by not asking.

Holly implies that people who don't like explicit communication should effectively be banned from kissing: she says, "they can go without ever being kissed until they wise up." I have a certain cantankerous sympathy for this perspective, and I have said similar things myself in the past. But my research into pickup artists made me wonder about whether this perspective is tenable, given a world in which most people seem to enjoy and engage in a great deal of tacit communication.

Speaking only for myself, I must admit that I like it when a man can read my unspoken signals well enough that he can tell when to kiss me without asking aloud. Sometimes it can be nice when a guy asks. But if he can read my tacit communication about kissing, that is a signal that he can read a lot of my other tacit communication as well.

Furthermore, if many people really enjoy unspoken social games and strategic uncertainty, then "the game" will never go away. Evidence that people enjoy those things does not only include the pickup artist subculture -- romantic comedies and romance novels consistently find a market, after all.

Additionally, part of improving sexual communication means learning more about unspoken communication -- not just spoken communication. The pioneering social economist Peter F. Drucker once said, "The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said." This maxim is no less true when it comes to sex than it is in any other area of human endeavor. PUAs have spent years gathering information on tacit sexual communication, so perhaps one feminist goal should be to try and understand what they've learned, such as the characteristics of excellent social "calibration."

Some feminists and BDSMers exist who already think a lot about teaching implicit or unspoken communication. On the feminist side, one webpage about sexual violence features an image of a woman saying: "I stopped kissing you back. I pushed your hand away. I said I wanted to leave. It all meant 'NO'." On the BDSM side, there is often an expectation that BDSM partners will discuss their experience and reactions once they are done doing BDSM with each other, so as to learn more about how to read each other's tacit signals. However, I have never encountered a BDSM seminar on the topic of non-verbal communication, though I've attended several on verbal communication.

My perspective on non-verbal communication is not without precedent among feminist BDSMers, though my willingness to deal extensively with PUAs might be. Still, I believe that non-verbal communication is not taught well, and that feminists and BDSMers in particular do not spend enough time discussing its role in sexual interactions. Given that both communities emphasize that consent and communication are crucially intertwined, perhaps both communities might draw insight from some PUA conceptions of "kino," "calibration" and other ways of examining implicit communication.

I once started a thread about pickup artists on a major feminist blog, to which one feminist responded: "I'm getting so sick of these PUA threads.... So I'll just come out and say it: PUAs rape women through coercion and manipulation. Full stop."

There are a lot of things about pickup artistry that I really do not like. There were points during my PUA adventures when I learned about incidents and strategies that blatantly sound like rape. This is a huge can of worms, and I discussed it at great length in my book. For now I will only note that there is an entire PUA area of inquiry called "Last Minute Resistance" (or "LMR"): that is, what happens when a woman resists having sex. "Last Minute Resistance tactics" ("LMR tactics") are designed to convince a woman who has expressed hesitance, distaste or discomfort to have sex anyway.

"The first two 'no's don't mean much, and should be expected," advises one PUA while outlining LMR tactics. This is exactly the kind of thing that gives the community a bad name. In fairness, some PUAs talk about trying to understand why a girl is uncomfortable, and then addressing the root cause of her discomfort. For example, a PUA might advise asking whether she is menstruating, and then reassuring her that he won't be grossed out by having sex if she is. Some PUAs try to claim that most LMR tactics are harmless and communicative, but this is a difficult claim to defend. I have always been more impressed by the few PUAs who simply advocate respecting Last Minute Resistance, such as David Shade:

Do not push against last minute resistance. You will be like all the other guys who objectify women and do not respect her as a real person. And it will reek of desperation.

... In fact, move things along just slightly slower than she'd like it. Make her wait. It builds that sexual tension, and it makes her think. When she is away from you, she is going to think about it a lot.

Of course, while Shade is advising his clients to respect boundaries, he's advising them to respect boundaries as a tactic for seducing the woman eventually. Another example of this approach comes from Mark Manson, who appears more interested in respecting women for the sake of respecting women, but whose main thrust is still seduction advice:

In [an LMR situation], there's always a fork in the road: you can do the typical freeze-out/high-pressure PUA bullshit to try to manipulate her or annoy her into giving up the resistance. Or you can be honest about the situation and resign yourself to accepting the fact that you may not have sex tonight.

Guys, listen. Always, always, always go with the second option. It may sound counter-intuitive, but you have to go with the second option. Not only because it's the right thing to do. Not only because it's what any respectful human being should do. But because if you make it clear that there is absolutely no pressure for her to sleep with you, if you show her that you can be trusted and that you're OK with whatever she decides (and by the way, you do need to be OK with whatever she decides), then she's going to become ten times more comfortable with you, and therefore is actually more likely to WANT to have sex with you.

PUA frameworks and tactics are often consent-friendly. Many "LMR tactics" encourage pushiness or even outright non-consensual behavior, such as ignoring the woman when she says, "No." Yet things I discussed in previous sections of this article – such as "negs," and body-language "kino" tactics -- are clearly neutral: their usage is shaped mostly by the goals of individual PUAs and the social context in which they occur. Discussions of

social "calibration" -- increasing one's capacity to read social situations -- as well as "inner game" and being attractive by improving oneself will generally be a positive good. Indeed, it could be argued that no PUA tactics are inherently abusive, but some are more obviously susceptible to being used badly... the same way a sword is more obviously susceptible to evil usage than a table.

Previous feminist writers have usually preferred to complain about the seduction community's misogyny rather than examining the community deeply. I have been more interested to see whether I could understand and make use of the positive PUA theories. Understanding the "Darth Vader" types might be useful, too. There is a percentage of PUAs who are non-consensually hurting women, and if we learn how those men do it, we might also figure out how to disarm them.

I must acknowledge that I eventually felt that the community was damaging, poisonous, and unhealthy for me -- to the extent that I needed to get out and detox. (PUA detox is a recognized phenomenon even among some PUAs... and former PUAs.) However, there are truths within it that are both intriguing and important.

I have never quite erased my fear of having my "feminist card" revoked, although it is not clear how "feminists" -- a fractious group if ever there was one -- could withdraw my presence in the movement. There is no Central Standards Bureau for feminists. Perhaps inevitably, the feminist reaction to *Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser* was quite mixed... although some other feminists appear to agree that there are important and interesting things to learn from PUAs about gender, culture, and feminist consent models.

An overall lesson here might be that thinkers with a lot in common are increasingly isolated from each other through the accelerating Balkanization of detailed, insular, interest-based subcultures. Like the drive towards interdisciplinary research in academia, perhaps a kind of interdisciplinary subcultural approach is being developed by those of us more interested in building bridges than burning them.

* * *

This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/02/27/feminist-sm-lessons-from-the-seduction-community/

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S&M:

[storytime] The Strange Binary of Dominance and Submission

I wrote this in early 2012, and it was originally published at RoleReboot.org. If I had to summarize my relationship with this gentleman today, then ironically enough, I'd say that "it got complicated and I'm pretty sure it's over now." I still like this piece, though.

* * *

The Strange Binary of Dominance and Submission

It's been a while since I felt simultaneously very into someone, and very sure about him. It's a strange feeling. I've been playing with theories about how "flirtation is basically an exercise in strategic ambiguity" and "insecurity is an integral part of romantic intoxication" and "uncertainty is an emotional amplifier," and I do think that those ideas are true in many ways. But I got so wrapped up in theory that I forgot how it feels to be way into someone... and only a little bit scared.

* * *

I met Mica at a Saturday night party. When I left the next morning, he said he wanted to see me again as soon as possible. "Monday?" he asked. "Tuesday?"

"Monday," I said. "Tomorrow."

He's a smart, creative thinker. There are layers to him, and he practically shines: so why not name him for the mineral Mica? I would love talking to him for those reasons alone. But there's also a kind of certainty to him; a calm presence; an extraordinary quality of attention. Once he's focused on a partner, there's a rhythm behind everything he does. He's so precise that when I'm kissing him, I feel like an awkward puppy.

I observed this very quickly, and something else: that the quality of his attention -- often **overtook** him. Controlled him. In a sexual interaction, it's difficult to distract him from catering to me. And since he's excellent at reading my desires, I usually don't **want** to distract him.

It made me think of what I was like, years ago, before I understood my submissive tendencies. Mica hadn't done much explicit S&M before, and when he'd done it, he was dominant. I didn't want to project too much, or make any assumptions about him... but I couldn't help noticing.

The second night I was with him, I asked him to inflict light pain on me. Very light. I didn't want to go further with him, yet. But his instincts for delivering pain and watching my reactions were, as I suspected, beautifully calibrated.

The third night I was with him, he touched my face and kissed me. I felt my eyelashes flutter and my body melt, and he smiled. Then he said, "I'm feeling really gentle tonight. I don't know how much I'm up for."

He doesn't want S&M right now, I thought. Sometimes guys date me and get anxious that I'll be disappointed when they don't want to do S&M. This is understandable, given that I'm an S&M writer. But I hate that, because the last thing I want is for one of my partners to feel obligated... and besides, even I don't want all-S&M-all-the-time. I smiled directly into Mica's eyes and told him I was fine with it.

In bed, I watched him. Watched his extraordinary attentiveness. Eventually we got to a point where I was leaning over him, kissing him. I watched him give up his body to the kiss. *He doesn't want S&M right now,* I thought... *except that his main experience with S&M, so far, is being in charge.*

"Do you trust me?" I asked him.

"Yes," he said. "Absolutely."

I clenched my nails into Mica's side, and his back arched. It was the clearest invitation I'd seen from him and, I suspected, the clearest invitation he knew how to give. If he even knew that he was giving it. It can take a lot of time and experience for a submissive to learn what they want well enough to give good feedback for it. It's one of those submissive skills that people don't think about enough, because for some reason we're always too busy teaching dominant skills.

I kissed Mica again, and tore into his back.

He was ready for it. His breathing fast became irregular; he gasped; he shook in my hands. After a while, I pulled back and simply observed the intensity flooding through him. His body undulated like a wave.

"I knew you were dangerous," he breathed. "In exactly the way that I want."

"Dangerous," I repeated. I hesitated. "What do you mean?" His eyelashes flickered, and I saw that he was too far under to answer me. He probably barely knew what he was saying. (In S&M, we call this state of mind subspace.)

I pushed him a little farther. I only used my nails, but you can do a lot with your nails. I said his name, over and over. He struggled, he fought his own body. I observed the struggle and saw myself in it. "I know," I told him.

Eventually Mica said, quite seriously, that he wanted to stop. I was certain that he could take more. A lot more. I might have been able to convince him to continue, and had him thank me for it later. But he needs to know that I'll respect him when he says to stop. Also, in a somewhat self-interested way, I don't want to set a precedent where his boundaries are entirely nonverbal; where his limits depend on my capacity to see through him. Maybe someday, when we know each other really well. Right now, it would make it too easy to seriously harm him... and for him to hate me afterwards.

So I stopped.

"No one has ever touched me so deeply, so fast before," Mica said, later. And, later later: "This changes **everything**." I lay still, kept my arms around him, listening. "That was total catharsis," he said. "I mean --" a note of doubt crept into his voice. "Do you actually **like** doing that?"

"Yes," I said. I said it fast and hard, because he needs to believe it. I understood why he was asking: I've been there. When I was first getting into S&M, the first time I felt that way, I had a hard time believing that my partner actually liked doing that for me. It felt so incredible. It felt like I couldn't possibly be giving back as much as I received. Sometimes, I still feel that insecurity.

"I'm glad you like it," Mica said. I felt his body relax next to mine. "Because I'm going to want that again."

"I know," I said softly.

I tried not to be afraid. Not only because I like him so much, and it's easy to be afraid. But because someone like Mica, who wants so much to give, can be seriously damaged by a partner who isn't careful to offer him space to be exactly who he is.

And, most of all, because S&M is a complex and fickle mistress. Because I knew that if Mica expected me to be able to do that regularly, he was bound to be disappointed. His tendencies are there, and I can learn them, but this one "total catharsis" depended on a confluence of factors: there had been something close to his surface, something he'd practically begged me to pull out, and it had been his first time.

Plus, S&M also depends on self-maintenance and reasonable expectations and respecting our own failures. An S&M relationship will be much less stable if the people involved can't accept imperfection.

I was scared, scared, **scared** that Mica believed me to be more amazing than I could ever possibly be.

* * *

The next day, Mica was thrilled by his scratches, and showed them off to me. I was pleased by how he eroticized the marks -- I do that, too -- but I also felt a moment of piercing guilt. "I'm sorry," I said. "I should have been more careful, before leaving marks like that. I should have asked."

Mica met my eyes directly, insistently. "No," he said. "Don't be sorry. Last night was amazing. You knew exactly where I needed to go."

I pushed back my fear -- *he expects too much of me* -- and answered quietly. I ended by telling him, "S&M can't be that, all the time." He nodded. I hoped he was listening.

Fortunately, he was. The next time we did it, Mica was slightly disappointed that it wasn't mind-blowing -- as I knew he would be. But he dealt with it. He articulated the disappointment to me, and he remembered that I'd warned him, and he said that he was prepared to take things as they came. And then, lying on his side next to me, watching me, he asked: "Do you want pain?"

I felt my eyes widen. I felt a spike of fear. I was already so into him. I knew that if I allowed him to get me to subspace, there'd be no going back.

"Yes," I said.

And again, that attention. In a way, sometimes, Mica's attentiveness can be strangely inconvenient. He's almost over-attuned to my desires. Even when I tell him to close his eyes, he can't lose himself that way; he can't make himself keep them closed. The quality of his attention is, however, quite remarkable when he hurts me.

"This is where you could take me apart," I said afterwards, as I surfaced out of that terrible vulnerability.

Mica looked at me, rested his head on me. "I just want to take care of you," he said.

* * *

When I was younger, it took me a while to get around to taking the dominant role. And there's still something I can reach when I'm being submissive and masochistic that I've never reached when I'm dominant. Still, I think of myself as a confirmed switch now: someone who can take either the submissive or dominant role. Yet it's such a strange binary, isn't it? If he rips me apart and then says, "I just want to take care of you," then which of us is in charge?

Mica told me recently that, "When you're hurting me, my favorite thing you say is 'I know.' Because you **do** know. You know exactly what it's like."

By now I'm barely scared. It hasn't been that long, and I'm trying to allow for New Relationship Energy. I know this could still go up in smoke. But we've talked about expectations, and we've talked through what we're both looking for, and we're both thinking of each other in a long-term way.

If I had to point to events that "proved" Mica has serious potential, two things would top the list. First, in the aftermath of his first incredible S&M experience, when he dealt with the disappointment of realizing that S&M can't always be that -- dealt with it quietly, sensibly, without drama, by talking to me. And second, when he said, in defiance of most aggressive stereotypical dominant roles: "I just want to take care of you."

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/02/10/storytime-the-strange-binary-of-dominance-and-submission/

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FEMINISM:

[storytime] My Mom's Rape Story, and A Confused Relationship With Feminism

I wrote this in 2012, for Mother's Day. It was originally published at the girl-power site OffOurChests.com.

* * *

My Mom's Rape Story, and A Confused Relationship With Feminism

My mother is a rape survivor. In 1970, when she was in her twenties, she came home alone one day with the groceries. As she was opening the door, a man came up behind her and forced her into the apartment, where he violently assaulted her. For years afterwards, my mother had Rape Trauma Syndrome -- a type of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder that affects rape survivors -- but neither RTS nor PTSD had yet been identified, and psychiatrists didn't know what to do with her.

Later in the decade, my mother dumped one of her boyfriends. He then came to her apartment one night, broke in, and raped her. As he got in bed, she was in the middle of a flashback. She cried and said "No," and he had sex with her anyway. When she tried to tell him later that what he'd done was unacceptable, he informed her that because she'd pursued him during their relationship -- because she was the one who originally asked him out -- a rape case would never stand up in court.

My mother met my dad many years after these incidents. Mom first told me that she'd been raped in my late teens, because she was considering telling her story to our church congregation, and she wanted me to know before she did that. The full stories came out during intermittent conversations in my twenties. I love both my parents with the fire of a thousand suns, and let me tell you, I've spent an unreasonable amount of time fantasizing about murdering the men who attacked my mother. I doubt I could find the first guy, but I could probably find the second, and in my early twenties I often imagined shooting him in the head. (Don't worry, Mom, I don't think about that anymore.)

Within the last few years, I started thinking about asking Mom's permission to write about her experiences and my reaction to them. I always shelved the idea because I felt that it wasn't my story to tell. Last year, the topic came up in conversation, and I finally asked permission; she said yes immediately. I double-checked her consent twice this year, and she said yes both times. Still, I was hesitant, and I only got around to it now -- for Mother's Day. I also asked her to review this piece, and to feel free to veto anything within it.

I am doing my best not to co-opt or appropriate my mother's story. But her story and her life have shaped mine, intimately -- including my views on gender issues, and my course as a feminist activist and writer. A few years ago, a widely-read *Harper's* article by established feminist Susan Faludi asserted that the relationship between younger feminists and older feminists is like a battle between girls and our moms. I read the article with interest, but also with a sense of displacement. As a teenager I fought with my mom all the time, but she and I rarely argue anymore, and we never argue about issues of feminism or sexuality at all. If "young" feminism is about rebelling against our mothers, then I missed that boat completely.

In fairness, my mom's not easy to rebel against. When I was 15, I asked her what she'd do if I ran off with a Hell's Angel. She laughed. "I'd probably be jealous," she said.

* * *

I started blogging in 2008 because I wanted to write about sexuality, particularly S&M. However, I identified myself as a feminist from the start, because I wanted to make it obvious that S&M and feminism are not mutually exclusive. The conflicts of feminism and S&M have been a major theme throughout the Feminist Sex Wars. I tend to repeat myself when I write about this, so I'll just mention my favorite quotation on the matter; it comes from the German radical feminist Alice Schwarzer, who said, "Female masochism is collaboration!"

When I came out of the closet to my mom, I had been freaking out about my S&M identity for a while -- but quietly. I told my parents about my sexuality because I wanted

to go into therapy, but I wanted a Kink Aware therapist who wouldn't shame me for my S&M preferences. The specific therapist I preferred was out-of-network for my health insurance, which meant I needed help paying for it. My dad was cool with it, but he didn't say much. My mother paused when I told her... and then she explained that S&M is part of her sexuality, too.

I was shocked. I was also incredibly relieved. If my brilliant, independent mother was into S&M, then suddenly I felt much more okay about being into it myself. It turned out that she had explored S&M late in life -- and she went through the same anxiety about feminism and S&M that I'd felt. "You're not giving up your liberation," she told me.

Mom also acknowledged the stereotype that S&M arises from abusive experiences. "I once worried that being raped made me into S&M," she said. "But I remember having S&M feelings in my childhood and early teens, long before I was raped. I was like this all along." When she said that, I caught my breath in recognition.

This is another topic I often repeat myself about, but that's because it's important. As it happens, the biggest and best-designed study on S&M found that there is no correlation between abusive experiences and being into S&M. There's also plenty of anecdotal evidence within the S&M community that a lot of S&Mers, though not all, feel our S&M identities to be innate (sometimes described as an "orientation"). This is not to say that there's anything wrong with understanding or processing abuse through consensual S&M. The psychologist Peggy Kleinplatz once published a scholarly article called "Learning From Extraordinary Lovers: Lessons From The Edge," which discusses how therapists can help their clients by studying alternative sexualities. Kleinplatz included a case study of a couple whose S&M experiences helped them process their histories of abuse. However, abusive experiences should not be seen as the usual "creator" of S&M desires. (For more on this, check out my article on S&M and the psychiatric establishment.)

The stereotype that S&M "comes from" abuse is another reason I worried about writing this article. Basically, this is a prettily-wrapped gift to Internet commentators who enjoy writing posts or hate mail about how fucked up I am, or about how dysfunctional S&M is. I guess there's no help for that.

* * *

"I'm fascinated that you've adopted feminism so thoroughly," my mother told me once. "I never felt like I was into feminism like you are."

"What?" I said. "Are you serious?"

"Well, feminism shaped my life," she said. "I really had my consciousness raised by some of my experiences. Not just being raped, but by other things, like seeing the anger and resentment among my mother and her sisters. Feminism helped me understand how women compete and put each other down because we're put in that position by men who have power over us. Sometimes, we're like animals who have been starved into fighting for scraps.

"But," my mother continued, "I've never been sure about calling myself a feminist. There have always been a lot of feminist areas I didn't feel welcome. Your dad was a card-

carrying member of the National Organization for Women when I met him, and I refused to join. We used to joke about it. And you remember that recent article about the history of *Ms. Magazine* you emailed me? In the article, Gloria Steinem says that anyone could have walked into the *Ms.* office in the 1970s and gotten a job. But I certainly never felt like I could do that. I was actually living in New York when *Ms.* started, and I was even working in publishing... but I grew up on a farm in the midwest, and I wasn't like the women who ran *Ms.* They felt like a club."

My upbringing has not been like my mother's. I grew up with a lot more privilege; my mother used to call me a spoiled "princess" when she was angry, and one of my ex-boyfriends used to tease me by calling me "East Coast Intellectual." Yet in a lot of ways, it took me a while to get into feminism, too. Gender issues have always been a strand of my thinking, but plenty of feminist discourse never impressed me. In university, I felt like everything I heard from feminism was a tortured conspiracy theory. And although I identified as "feminist" from the very beginning of blogging, it was out of a sense of resistance rather than feeling included. I felt like: *Goddamnit, I will* ***show you*** *that I can be an independent and rational woman who values voting and abortion rights and equal opportunity and consent -- and be into S&M at the same damn time.*

As I kept writing, I was looking at other blogs about gender and sexuality, too. The ones whose analysis really spoke to me were usually feminist blogs. And those were also, often, the bloggers who noticed me in return. My work was highlighted by a number of feminist writers who wanted to raise my profile. Talking to them, I began to understand some sophisticated critiques that I'd previously labeled "conspiracy theories." I expanded my understanding of topics like rape culture, as well as "tangential" social justice issues like race and class. My mother said to me, long afterwards: "Feminism really reached out and grabbed you, didn't it."

In 2011, I heard from a feminist friend about organizations that train volunteer advocates for rape survivors. In Chicago and many other cities, when people who have been raped go to the emergency room, the hospital will ask if they want an advocate. The advocate's role is to provide immediate crisis counseling and to help the survivor deal with complexities of the medical and legal system. The minute I heard about advocacy, I knew I wanted to do it.

In 1970, my mother didn't have an advocate, for the simple reason that advocates did not yet exist. Rape Trauma Syndrome was first recognized by feminists in the 1970s, and assault advocacy was developed by feminists during that time as well.

I told Mom all about the advocacy curriculum while I was completing it, and she drank up every detail. "I never got support like that," she said. "My boyfriend insisted that we go to the emergency room, and I guess he tried to advocate for me, but the doctors and nurses ignored me for 20 hours and then sent me home. It was worse that the nurses did. If sisterhood was powerful, then couldn't they reach out to me somehow?" (Rape survivors -- at least in Illinois -- are now prioritized in emergency rooms, second only to life-and-death situations.)

Mom often regales me with tales about how things used to be. For example, when she became editor of her college newspaper in the 1960s, all the dudes on staff quit because

they wouldn't work under a woman. (Some returned later, rather sheepishly.) Other favorites have to do with menstruation. It turns out that back in the day, doctors – who were of course always male -- simply refused to accept the existence of PMS. Apparently, it was accepted among doctors that a woman who felt cramps while menstruating was "making it up." (Female nurses who attempted to describe the actual feeling were ignored.) It was understood that a woman who felt unusually emotional or even in physical pain while menstruating was just being moody and hysterical. (You know how women are!) As more women became doctors and feminism gained traction and science advanced with a broader perspective and scientists discovered the actual physical causes of cramps, PMS became recognized as a real thing. Cramps were no longer "typical female hysteria."

Which, of course, makes it all the more ironic that PMS is now often used as an excuse to discount women as hysterical. It makes me laugh, in my cynical way.

It's kind of astonishing that a woman like my mother would disclaim a strong connection with feminism. And yet she does.

* * *

This year I had my first Full-On Internet Feminist Scandal, during which I received hate mail and hate comments from other feminists. (I name the event in capital letters because email from other feminists, some of whom I don't even know, has told me that if you stick with Internet Feminism long enough, it's basically inevitable that you obtain one of these.) The worst of it fell on a holiday when I was visiting my mother. Mom was helping out at church, and wanted me to attend the sermon. I sobbed for hours before leaving home; I managed to make it to church, but I was such a wreck when I got there that she put me in a back room so I could be alone to cry.

To be clear, I definitely think that I've screwed up on some social justice issues in the past, and I'm sure that I will in the future. I am doing my best to keep myself honest and work on the areas where I've been called out. That's a crucial part of social justice work, and it's one I try to take seriously.

But I have to tell you, the piece I wrote that drew the biggest backlash was one that my mother loved. (In the interests of accountability, I'll say that I do think a lot of the critiques are valid and important, like this one for example -- and, for those in the audience who are familiar with feminist call-out culture, I recommend a couple insightful comments from a brilliant *Feministe* commenter named saurus.) When I wrote the initial draft, I felt so uncertain that I asked Mom to review it, and she said: "I think this is one of the best things you've ever written." Yet one key factor in many of these critiques is that I failed to make enough space for rape survivors. I plan to write differently about the topic in the future, but there's real irony in the fact that the most important rape survivor in my life believes that one of my best pieces is the same one that got me hate mail for failing rape survivors. (Of course, I also received incredibly personal comments about my sex life. The Feminist Sex Wars ain't over yet.)

Mom and I discussed it later, of course. She read some of the commentary online, and she came back shaking her head. "The things some feminists are saying about you really

floored me," she said. "But I'm not completely surprised. Feminism has always been one of those movements that eats its young. That's one reason I never identified with it. I think there are a lot of people my age who started out living feminist lives, who now wouldn't be caught dead calling themselves feminist. Women who had careers, who raised sensitive, loving sons and strong daughters... who find the baggage of the 'feminist' label distasteful."

I've thought a lot about my mother's comment that feminism "eats its young." One 2009 *New Yorker* article about feminism by Ariel Levy offered an interesting analysis of feminist divisions, but included one offhand claim that isn't explained or justified: "Revolutions are supposed to devour their young." Is that so? Nobody told me. (Perhaps ironically, Levy presents this claim while stating that feminism has actually turned against its elders.)

Some commentators have told me that if I can't take the heat, then I just shouldn't write about feminism. It hurts to think it, but maybe they're right. Somehow, the idea of being "a good feminist" has become utterly tangled up in my identity. It's a weak spot and a sore spot, in a way that I didn't anticipate and don't fully understand. I find social justice criticism to be nourishing when it's generous and constructive, sometimes even when it's aggressive -- but sometimes it feels so incredibly destructive. But as I said, I'm not at all the only feminist writer who feels that the community can be internally destructive. How much of the problem is the vitriol within some critiques, and how much is that feminism has become "who we are" rather than "something we do"?

I think we can all agree that it's good to call out other people when they're screwing up -- but there has to be a way for us to build a movement without eating our young. Yet from what my mother tells me, we've never been good at that.

On the bright side, I don't have to engage politically with feminism in order to be a feminist, or volunteer for feminist causes, or do feminist work. And it helps to understand that I don't have to be "a good feminist" for my mother to be proud of me. (My dad's another matter.)

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During one of our recent conversations, I confirmed again with my mother that I had permission to write about her experience. Then I asked her if she's out of the closet as a rape survivor.

"I don't know," she said thoughtfully. "I guess so. I don't really think about it. I'm happy with my life now." She paused and drank her tea for a moment. "I don't think of myself as a rape survivor anymore," she added. "By 1980, ten years after the attack, I really thought I was emerging from the cave. And I was, but I was still metaphorically covered in dirt and cobwebs, with grit in my mouth. In the first few years I was with your dad -- the early 1980s -- I had residual fears. I had become frightened by subways, elevators, and surprise noises, and he helped me work my way through those very effectively. By 25 years, it was simply no longer a part of my current self. I'd say I am wiser and stronger for it, but I think an experience so shocking is a lousy way to build character. And a waste of time! I lost too many years. I hope that things like victim advocacy saves

people."

I'm glad that my mother feels good about life today, and I myself don't have the urge to track those guys down and rend them limb from limb. (Much.) Yet I wonder if the men who attacked her ever think about what they did. I wonder if the ex-boyfriend ever understood how thoroughly he brutalized someone he claimed to love, or how male privilege played a role in his actions. These days, I write a lot about masculinity, and I try to understand men's perspective on gender issues. Writing about men and gender is tricky territory, though. What if I end up shoring up the entitlement that led that those assholes to attack my mom?

Mom told me that she Googled her rapist ex-boyfriend. He has three daughters. She wonders whether he ever thinks about it, too.

Naturally, I also think a lot about feminism, and how we can make it both effective and welcoming. What does it mean when people call it a movement that "eats its young"? What does it mean that feminism has become so tied up in identity? What does it mean when a rape survivor who had a career and raised a feminist daughter won't call herself a feminist? What does it mean that taking on the "feminist" label means taking on a host of other associations -- associations that even women like my mother are unwilling to accept?

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This can be found on the Internet at:

http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2012/05/25/my-moms-rape-story-and-a-confused-relationship-with-feminism/

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Section 3 Study Guide

Having established the building blocks of Section 1, and the extra perspectives of Section 2, this section was intended to pull together some seriously multi-layered syntheses.

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1. Is it hard to relate BDSM theory and practice to feminism or anti-rape activism? If so, then how is it hard? If not, then why do some people believe that there are difficulties?

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2. Which issues of sexuality do you feel clear about, and which do you feel foggy or uncertain about? How and why?

2a. Do you have a sense of what makes you feel strong and centered in your sexuality and relationships? If so, how do you go about establishing those factors in your life?

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3. Did you have a particularly hostile or excited reaction to any of these pieces? If so, why?

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4. Are there any binaries or bright lines that you're questioning as a result of reading these pieces?

4a. Could questioning those divisions have an impact upon your identity, or upon the way you act towards others?

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5. What are the overarching patterns that you see within the pieces in this section? How are these disparate topics relevant to each other?

5a. Does this stuff really have to be so complicated?

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About The Author

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Clarisse Thorn is a feminist, sex-positive educator who has delivered sex-related lectures and workshops to a variety of audiences, including New York's Museum of Sex, San Francisco's Center for Sex & Culture, and universities across the USA. She created and curated the original Sex+++ sex-positive documentary film series at Chicago's historic feminist site, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum. She has also volunteered as an archivist, curator and fundraiser for that venerable S&M institution, the Leather Archives & Museum. In 2010, Clarisse returned from working on HIV mitigation in sub-Saharan Africa. Her writing has appeared across the Internet in many many places. She blogs about feminist sexuality with a focus on S&M at clarissethorn.com, and tweets @clarissethorn.

Handy links for connecting with Clarisse:

Blog: http://clarissethorn.com/blog

Twitter: http://twitter.com/ClarisseThorn

Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/clarisse.thorn

Find other Smashwords books by Clarisse:
https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/clarissethorn

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Also check out Clarisse's awesome book

Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser!

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There's a huge subculture of men who trade tips, tricks, and tactics for seducing women. Clarisse Thorn, a feminist S&M writer and activist, spent years researching these guys. She observed their discussions, watched them in action, and learned their strategies. By the end, she'd given a lecture at a seduction convention. This is her story -- and her theories about feminism and seduction to boot.

https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/144451

In paperback: https://www.createspace.com/3830583

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Clarisse's Lectures, Workshops and Events

Thank you so much for reading my work. Now for the hustle!

I'm not just a writer -- I also give lectures and workshops, and organize events. Here's a short list of some of the lectures, workshops and events I offer. I'm available by email at clarisse.thorn@gmail.com, if you'd like to bring me in.

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* **Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser.** There's a whole subculture out there devoted to teaching men how to seduce women. Over the last few years, these underground "pickup artists" have slowly surfaced into the popular consciousness, with the help of bestselling books like Neil Strauss's *The Game* and hit reality shows like VH1's *The Pick-Up Artist.* I spent two years doing on-and-off research into these Casanovas. In this lecture I discuss my experiences talking to pickup artists, learning their techniques, understanding their community frameworks and norms, and eventually giving them tips on how to seduce women... all of which culminated in my book, *Confessions of a Pickup Artist Chaser: Long Interviews With Hideous Men*. This presentation was originally created for a lunchtime talk at the Center for Gender Studies at the University of Chicago, and I can deliver it in 90 minutes or less.

* **Leadership in the Bedroom: A Sexual Communication Workshop.** Down-to-earth tips and ideas on how to communicate clearly about sex. This workshop was originally requested by the University of Illinois at Chicago, but I've given versions of it at other venues as well. It was one of the first workshops I ever designed, and I'm currently working on streamlining it and making it more interactive. I can do it in an hour, but it's really better with two hours.

* **BDSM Overview.** Imagery deriving from bondage, discipline, dominance, submission, and sadomasochism (BDSM) is becoming commonplace -- and we all know (or think we know) what a dominatrix is -- but most people don't have much idea of what BDSM

actually involves. Although it is increasingly accepted as an alternative sexual orientation, BDSM remains surrounded by stigma, scandal and occasional legal action. This presentation covers the basics of BDSM (however, it's not a how-to lecture -- you aren't going to learn how to use a whip, though you'll learn where to go to find out!). I prefer to poll the audience to see what they want to cover on top of that -- BDSM history? cultural landmarks? BDSM & feminism? legal issues? I've got it all! I have given this lecture more than any other. It can be squished into an hour, but I prefer two hours.

* **Sex-Positivity for Everyone! Including the Mens!** What is masculinity or male advocacy as a movement, and how is it in dialogue with contemporary feminism? Can it be incorporated into feminism, or can the values of the sex-positive feminist community speak to its concerns? What does positive, productive talk about masculinity sound like? I talk about all this in a short lecturette and then facilitate small discussions on kinky male sexuality, men in the pickup artist community, and men who buy sex. This workshop was originally requested by the University of Chicago, and based on feedback from that experience and others, I have been adapting it. It should take about 90 minutes.

* **The Sex+++ Film Series at Jane Addams Hull-House Museum and related film screenings.** I have now overseen many many screenings of sex-positive documentaries, and facilitated followup discussions afterwards. In the past I have done this primarily to accomplish my own activist educational goals or to raise funds for deserving institutions, but I'd be happy to run a screening or two upon request. Please note, however, that I don't own the rights to all the films I've screened, and so if you want me to run a screening for you, you may need to budget extra in order to cover the rights. I started the Sex+++ Film Series at Chicago's Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, and as I write this in 2012, the film series is in its fourth year. You can look at the film series calendar here: http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/03/17/the-sex-positive-documentary-film-list-2011-2012/

I would certainly be willing to design a new workshop or lecture upon request -- in fact, two of the above events were created at the request of the institutions that invited me.

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Footnotes

All these links were last checked in early 2012.

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Section 1: The Basics

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S&M: **Love Bites: An S&M Coming-Out Story**

1. Kink Aware Professionals: https://ncsfreedom.org/resources/kink-aware-professionals-directory/kap-directory-homepage.html -- [back]

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Education: **Liberal, Sex-Positive Sex Education: What's Missing**

1. The Unitarian Universalist Our Whole Lives curriculum: http://www.uua.org/re/owl/ -- [back]

2. *New Yorker* review of the new *Joy of Sex:* http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2009/01/05/090105crbo_books_levy -- [back]

3. Synopsis of conservative book *Modern Sex:* http://www.manhattan-institute.org/modern/ -- [back]

4. Cuddle parties: http://current.com/shows/max-and-jason-still-up/89557966_first-time-cuddle-party.htm -- [back]

5. Scarleteen's sexual inventory checklist: http://www.scarleteen.com/article/advice/yes_no_maybe_so_a_sexual_inventory_stocklist -- [back]

6. *Yes Means Yes* blog on how affirmative communication combats rape: http://yesmeansyesblog.wordpress.com/2009/01/16/the-words-that-come-after-i-want/ -- [back]

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Communication: **Sex Communication Tactic Derived From S&M: Checklists**

1. Example of a BDSM checklist: http://www.thebrc.net/check_list/default.htm -- [back]

2. Scarleteen's sex checklist: http://www.scarleteen.com/article/advice/yes_no_maybe_so_a_sexual_inventory_stocklist -- [back]

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Communication: **Sex Communication Tactic Derived From S&M: Journal-Keeping**

1. Submissive journaling prompts: http://bdsm-sexperts.blogspot.com/2010/07/submissive-journaling-prompts.html -- [back]

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Communication: **Sex Communication Case Studies**

1. The previous post about a really problematic relationship: http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/03/01/storytime-how-my-life-wasnt-always-happy-fun-boundaries-are-perfect-land/ -- [back]

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Feminism: **Towards My Personal Sex-Positive Feminist 101**

1. An excellent definition and discussion of the word "cisgendered," by trans activist

Asher Bauer: http://carnalnation.com/content/49458/1067/word-day-cis -- [back]

2. Analysis of the "virgin" shoot at Kink.com: http://missmaggiemayhem.com/2011/01/12/virginity/ -- [back]

3. Most women don't achieve orgasm through penis-in-vagina sex alone: http://www.scarleteen.com/article/advice/i_cant_orgasm_from_intercourse_and_its_ruining_my_relationship -- [back]

4. Asexual writer discusses sex-positive feminism: http://www.feministe.us/blog/archives/2012/02/07/an-asexual-map-for-sex-positive-feminism/ -- [back]

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S&M: **S&M Superpowers**

1. Study demonstrates that BDSM desires do not arise from abuse: http://www.news.com.au/top-stories/bondage-lovers-normal-maybe-even-happier/story-e6frfkp9-1111117296864 -- [back]

2. A post of mine on nonsensical stigma, in the context of whore stigma: http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2010/12/17/whore-stigma-makes-no-sense/ -- [back]

3. Psychology paper "Learning from Extraordinary Lovers" by Peggy Kleinplatz: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16803770 -- [back]

4. Study finds that consensual S&M increases intimacy: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18563549 -- [back]

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S&M: **BDSM Can Be "Love Sex" Too**

1. Rachel Rabbit White's "Lady Porn Day": http://rachelrabbitwhite.com/ladypornday/ -- [back]

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S&M: **Body Chemistry and S&M**

1. Awesome page on aftercare: http://www.leathernroses.com/generalbdsm/chrismaftercare.htm -- [back]

2. EduKink is a pair of San Francisco S&M educators: http://www.edukink.org/ -- [back]

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Orgasmic "Dysfunction": **A Unified Theory of Orgasm**

1. A tactic called "gaslighting" is a common one used by emotional abusers: http://www.feministe.us/blog/archives/2011/11/21/one-abuse-script-with-many-faces/ -- [back]

2. Kink Aware Professionals: https://ncsfreedom.org/resources/kink-aware-professionals-

directory/kap-directory-homepage.html -- [back]

3. Betty Dodson's video "Did I Orgasm?": http://www.youtube.com/v/rkCihT1mkmc -- [back]

4. Our definitions of orgasm are fairly narrow: http://sexuality.about.com/od/anatomyresponse/a/what_is_orgasm.htm -- [back]

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Boundaries: **Orgasms Aren't My Favorite Part Of Sex, and My Chastity Urge**

1. Deliberately limiting orgasms for a more amorous relationship: http://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/too-many-orgasms/ -- [back]

2. Scarleteen discusses women and "squirting" orgasms: http://www.scarleteen.com/article/advice/squirt_on_female_ejaculation -- [back]

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Evolution: **Sexual Openness: Two Ways To Encourage It**

1. Comstock Films makes documentaries about real couples and how they have sex: http://comstockfilms.com/ -- [back]

2. CineKink, "the really alternative film festival": http://cinekink.com -- [back]

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Relationships: **Fear, Loathing, and S&M Sluthood in San Francisco**

1. My blog post "There It Is": http://clarissethorn.wordpress.com/2010/10/28/litquote-storytime-there-it-is/ -- [back]

2. The Sutro Baths, extraordinary ruins in San Francisco: http://www.flickr.com/photos/vicster/2816355231/in/set-72157607093679758/ -- [back]

3. A blog post I wrote on the perils of vanilla-but-questioning dudes: http://clarissethorn.wordpress.com/2010/11/05/bdsm-vs-vanilla-part-1-why-i-pretend-i-dont-date-vanilla-but-questioning-men/ -- [back]

4. The "lost" 21st chapter of *A Clockwork Orange:* http://www.visual-memory.co.uk/amk/doc/0062.html -- [back]

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S&M: **BDSM As A Sexual Orientation, and Complications of the Orientation Model**

1. BDSM-phobic thread on a radical feminist blog: http://rageagainstthemanchine.com/2009/02/07/please-somebody-come-and-defend-kinkcom/ -- [back]

2. BDSM-related discrimination case and orientation notes from Charles Moser: http://www.xtra.ca/public/Vancouver/BDSM_lifestyler_unfit_to_drive_a_limo_police-6577.aspx -- [back]

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S&M: **BDSM "versus" Sex**

1. Definition of "prostitution" shifts and NYC dominatrixes are arrested: http://sexinthepublicsquare.org/ElizabethsBlog/ncsf-statement-on-pro-dom-work-and-prostitution-statutes -- [back]

2. Marty Klein's "Is There Such A Thing As Kinky Sex?": http://www.sexualintelligence.org/newsletters/issue128.html - three -- [back]

3. maymay on "kinky" not being limited to BDSM: http://maybemaimed.com/2010/10/05/honor-thy-language-kinky-is-an-adjective-not-an-activity/ -- [back]

4. Quasi-conservative organization Taken In Hand: http://www.takeninhand.com/ -- [back]

5. Comment from saurus: http://www.feministe.us/blog/archives/2011/10/09/bdsm-versus-sex-part-1-divide-and-conquer/ - comment-397105 -- [back]

6. *Feministe* post on the "violent sex" article: http://www.feministe.us/blog/archives/2011/07/12/violent-sex-writer-compromises-safety-of-rape-survivor/ -- [back]

7. Comment from Jadey: http://www.feministe.us/blog/archives/2011/06/27/the-best-most-disturbing-thing-you-will-read-today/ - comment-373440 -- [back]

8. Mac McClelland's "Violent Sex" article: http://www.good.is/post/how-violent-sex-helped-ease-my-ptsd/ -- [back]

9. My old post "Casual Sex? Casual Kink?": http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2008/12/26/casual-sex-casual-kink/ -- [back]

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S&M: **BDSM Roles, "Topping From The Bottom," and "Service Top"**

1. Thomas MacAulay Millar on "Domism": http://yesmeansyesblog.wordpress.com/2011/05/02/domism-role-essentialism-and-sexism-intersectionality-in-the-bdsm-scene/ -- [back]

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S&M: **"Inherent Female Submission": The Wrong Question**

1. The *Topologies* blog features three dominant female contributors: http://topologies.wordpress.com/2009/11/07/shifting-the-discourse-on-female-dominance/ -- [back]

2. Research on proportion of submissive BDSM women: http://kinkresearch.blogspot.com/2009/10/sex-role-ratio.html -- [back]

3. The female dominant blogger Bitchy Jones is pissed:

http://bitchyjones.wordpress.com/2009/03/14/bondage-awards-not-actually-sexist-on-purpose/ -- [back]

4. The male submissive blogger maymay is pissed: http://maybemaimed.com/2007/08/04/what-sexuality-might-taste-like-if-you-were-a-submissive-man-in-2007/ -- [back]

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Manliness: ***Fifty Shades of Grey, Fight Club,* and the Complications of Male Dominance**

1. The sex writer Violet Blue offers some hilarious *Fifty Shades* commentary and linkfarming: http://www.tinynibbles.com/blogarchives/2012/04/fifty-shades-of-linkbait.html The writer A.V. Flox also did a really great analysis of how badly *Fifty Shades* deals with S&M: http://www.blogher.com/troubling-message-fifty-shades-grey -- [back]

2. Pepper Mint's blog: http://freaksexual.wordpress.com/ -- [back]

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Abuse: **The Alt Sex Anti-Abuse Dream Team**

1. The post on SM-Feminist about the prevalence of abuse in the community: http://sm-feminist.blogspot.com/2007/11/wut-about-abuuuuuuuuuuzers.html -- [back]

2. A post on SM-Feminist about an abuse survivor who learned to set boundaries and protect herself through BDSM: http://sm-feminist.blogspot.com/2008/01/not-your-usual-bdsm-and-abuse-story.html -- [back]

3. Thomas MacAulay Millar's article "Not What We Do": http://yesmeansyesblog.wordpress.com/2010/09/21/not-what-we-do/ -- [back]

4. Front image of a pamphlet about abuse in BDSM: http://www.flickr.com/photos/35620214@N02/3488055736/ -- Back image of same pamphlet: http://www.flickr.com/photos/35620214@N02/3487239893/ -- [back]

5. Statement on BDSM and abuse from the Leather Leadership Conference: http://www.leatherleadership.org/library/diffsmabuse.htm -- Statement on BDSM and abuse from the Lesbian Sex Mafia: http://lesbiansexmafia.org/lsmnyc/bdsm-is-not-abuse/ -- [back]

6. Kink Aware Professionals: https://ncsfreedom.org/resources/kink-aware-professionals-directory/kap-directory-homepage.html -- [back]

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Section 2: Activism and Allies

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Activism: **Grassroots Organizing For Feminism, S&M, HIV, and Everything Else**

1. Bitch Magazine's Feminist Coming-Out Day Blog Carnival:

http://bitchmagazine.org/post/feminist-coming-out-day-blog-carnival -- [back]

2. My sex-positive documentary film series: http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2011/03/17/the-sex-positive-documentary-film-list-2011-2012/ -- [back]

3. Pamphlet on making a group egalitarian but well-organized: http://struggle.ws/hist_texts/structurelessness.html -- [back]

4. Chicago's Rape Victim Advocates: http://www.rapevictimadvocates.org/ -- [back]

5. Kink Aware Professionals: https://ncsfreedom.org/resources/kink-aware-professionals-directory/kap-directory-homepage.html -- [back]

6. My advice on activism in Africa: http://clarissethorn.com/blog/2010/01/31/clarisses-advice-column-arises-again-masculinity-african-activism/ -- [back]

7. An general overview I wrote of housing co-ops: http://www.rolereboot.org/sex-and-relationships/details/2012-04-housing-co-ops-arent-just-for-hippies -- [back]

8. North American Students of Cooperation: http://nasco.coop/ -- [back]

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Activism: **Interview with Richard Berkowitz, Star of *Sex Positive* and Icon of Safer Sex Activism**

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Glossary

As I said in the introduction, I try to keep my writing as accessible as possible. One way I do that is by avoiding jargon and by using terms that I think most people will recognize. I often write "S&M" instead of "BDSM," for example; and when I'm using technical S&M language like "top" or "bottom" or "scene," I try to define the words as I go along. But sometimes I slip into jargon by accident. Also, plenty of S&M terms are super useful, and giving a quick overview of S&M language can go a long way towards describing S&M culture. Hence, this glossary. Many of the terms in the Glossary aren't terms that I used in this book, but you might find it useful or interesting anyway. (I also included a few terms that come from other subcultures, like polyamory or queer studies or feminism, because why not.)

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aftercare (BDSM): A cool-down period after an S&M encounter, which often involves reassurance and a discussion of how things went. Aftercare is discussed a lot in this book, especially in "Aftercare or Brainwashing?" (part 3).

blaming the victim (feminism): The faulty assumption that an assault survivor caused or contributed to the assault.

bottom (BDSM): A blanket term for a *masochist* and/or *submissive.* Not everyone who is a *masochist* is *submissive,* and vice versa.

cisgendered (queer studies): A term that means "not transgendered." For example, Clarisse is a *cis* woman or a *cisgendered* woman. Here's an excellent essay by the trans activist Asher Bauer describing why the word *"cisgendered"* is important: http://carnalnation.com/content/49458/1067/word-day-cis

coming out (queer studies): Openly acknowledging one's sexual identity to oneself, one's parents, one's friends, and other parts of one's community.

dominant (BDSM): A person who enjoys being in charge during an S&M encounter.

dungeon (BDSM): *Dungeons* can often be split into two types: those owned and staffed by professionals, and those owned by people who are drawn to S&M for non-monetary reasons. There is occasionally overlap between the two groups, but often there's less overlap than one might think. Professional BDSM is frequently banned at non-professional *dungeons,* and non-professional *dungeons* are frequently non-profit organizations. Indeed, many non-professional *dungeons* could be described as "community centers" for BDSMers. They're basically centralized nodes for BDSM support, and they may host lectures, workshops, discussion groups, public parties, or other meetups.

enthusiastic consent (feminism): A standard for ethical sex whereby one is expected not just to have a consenting partner, but an enthusiastic and excited partner.

gender policing (feminism): Gender roles are defined by culture, and when a person steps outside their gender role, that person will often be *policed* or attacked by other members of the culture. For example, a USA man with long hair risks being mocked or beaten up.

hard limit (BDSM): A strong, negative BDSM preference that is discussed ahead of time. For example, a person who absolutely does not want to have anal sex would describe anal sex as a *hard limit.* See also: *soft limit.*

heteronormative (queer studies): A term used to describe the cultural expectations of "normal" heterosexual relationships. For example, the expectation that men are the ones to pursue women during romantic interactions is *heteronormative.*

kink (BDSM): A specific preference. For example, if Clarisse enjoys being whipped, then she has a *kink* for it. She could also say something like, "I *kink* on being whipped."

kinky (BDSM and others): A lot of BDSMers use *"kinky"* to mean "into BDSM." However, there are some people who use the term more broadly and include practices that aren't usually considered BDSM, such as *polyamory* or *swing.*

landmine (BDSM): An extremely sensitive psychological spot, sometimes hit accidentally during BDSM play. This is discussed further within this book, in "What Happens After An S&M Encounter 'Gone Wrong'" (part 3).

masochist (BDSM): A person who enjoys receiving pain.

New Relationship Energy (polyamory): The obsessive, irrational joy one feels after starting a relationship with a new and awesome partner. Here's an article about it: http://aphroweb.net/articles/nre.htm

out [of the closet] (queer studies): An adjective to describe a person who is open with people outside her sexual subculture about her sexual identity.

play (BDSM): A verb for having an S&M encounter. For example, if Clarisse was whipped by a gentleman, she might say that she "played with him." Clarisse once saw a display at the Leather Archives & Museum claiming that in Old Guard Leather Culture (i.e, gay men's S&M culture starting around the 1950s), the word was more often "work" than "play" -- apparently, even S&M toys were usually called "tools."

play party (BDSM): A party where S&M can happen openly. Some *play parties* ban sexual intercourse, while others don't.

polyamory: A community to support people who want to have multiple lovers and be honest with everyone involved. *Polyamory* usually focuses more on an emotional relationship than *swing,* but not always. The writer Franklin Veaux has a good Polyamory 101: http://www.xeromag.com/fvpoly.html And the blog *Polyamory In The News* has a good post on the various distinctions between polyamory and swing: http://polyinthemedia.blogspot.com/2009/12/polys-vs-swingers-as-viewed-from-2010.html

primary relationship (polyamory): A relationship with more commitment and expectations than other relationships. For example, a primary relationship might be one where the participants live together and/or are married. Polyamorists sometimes disagree about whether relationship hierarchies are desirable.

rape culture (feminism): A culture in which rape is prevalent and is maintained through fundamental attitudes and beliefs about gender, sexuality, and violence, including *rape myths*.

rape myths (feminism): Cultural ideas that make it harder to recognize, prosecute, and heal from rape. For example, many people believe that rape usually happens to young, "hot" women... but interviews with rapists show that they usually prioritize targets based on how vulnerable they are, rather than how "hot" they are.

sadist (BDSM): A person who enjoys inflicting pain.

safeword (BDSM): A word that any S&M participant can say at any time to stop the action. *Safewords* are extensively analyzed within this book, in the "The Annotated Safeword" (part 1).

scene; The Scene (BDSM): The word *scene* is often used to indicate an S&M encounter. For example, if Clarisse was whipped by some dude, she "had a *scene"* with him (or some would say that she *scened* with him). *The Scene* is also sometimes used to indicate the public S&M community -- the *dungeons,* workshops, lectures, discussion groups, and meetups that create an open network of BDSMers in many areas.

secondary relationship (polyamory): A relationship with less commitment and fewer expectations than other relationships. Polyamorists sometimes disagree about whether relationship hierarchies are desirable.

soft limit (BDSM): A weak, negative BDSM preference that is discussed ahead of time. For example, a person may strongly dislike anal sex, but be willing to have anal sex in certain contexts, like when he's really turned on; in that case, anal sex would be a *soft limit.* See also: *hard limit.*

squick (BDSM): A feeling of not wanting to participate in an act, without judging others for doing it. For example, if a BDSMer feels sick at the sight of blood yet doesn't want to express disgust towards blood fetishists, then she might describe herself as *squicked* by blood. The BDSM subculture generally places a high value on recognizing that one can be *squicked* by an act, without judging it.

submissive (BDSM): A person who enjoys receiving orders or otherwise accepting an experience defined by a partner.

swing: A community to support people who want to have sex with multiple people and be honest with everyone involved. Unlike *polyamorists,* swingers usually don't emphasize developing emotional connections in *secondary relationships,* but this isn't always true. Clarisse is less familiar with *swing* than *polyamory,* but some swingers emailed her this Swing 101: http://www.swingersboard.com/forums/faq.php?faq=swinger_faq And the blog *Polyamory In The News* has a good post on the various distinctions between polyamory and swing: http://polyinthemedia.blogspot.com/2009/12/polys-vs-swingers-as-viewed-from-2010.html

switch (BDSM): A person who feels comfortable in either the *top* or the *bottom* role.

top (BDSM): A blanket term for a *sadistic* and/or *dominant* partner. Not everyone who is *sadistic* is *dominant,* and vice versa.

vanilla (BDSM): A term to describe people who aren't into BDSM, or sexual acts that aren't perceived as BDSM. Some folks describe so-called "slightly BDSM" people or acts as *french vanilla.* Sometimes, non-BDSM people are offended by being described as *vanilla,* which Clarisse thinks is silly, but she often avoids the term anyway and says "not into S&M" instead.

ze (queer studies): A gender-neutral pronoun, also written as "xie." The possessive version is "zir" or "xir" or, sometimes, "hir."

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The Game: All Things Trump

Andres Serrano

"In the history of science the collector of specimens preceded the zoologist and followed the exponents of natural theology and magic….. However lowly, the work of the collector must be done, before he can proceed to the higher scientific tasks of classification, analysis, experiment and theory making."

Aldous Huxley from Heaven and Hell

Before Donald Trump was President, he was Donald Trump.

This is a portrait of that man.

In his first non-photography based installation, Andres Serrano takes us on a curious and insightful tour for a closer look at who Donald Trump is.

In a relatively short period of eight weeks with a determination and competitive ferocity worthy of its subject, the artist has amassed a collection of over 500 objects produced by or for Donald Trump.

The collection is telling and varies from objects as mundane as shirts, ties, suits, hats, jackets, ice buckets, Teddy Bears and miniature screwdriver sets made for Donald Trump, his brand, his casinos, his hotels, to Trump Tea, Trump Coffee, Trump Ice Water, Trump Coca-Cola, Trump 7-Up, Trump Snapple, and the more exotic $1,000 Trump Steaks ("The Best!"), Trump Vodka packed in 24 carat gold plated bottles, a Trump deodorant named "Success" and a Trump cologne called "Empire." In addition to the merchandise for Trump Plaza, Trump Harrah's Casino, Trump Marina, Trump Castle, Trump Tai Mahal, Trump University and Trump Shuttle there are casino chips, boxing invites, concert invites and many many more objects all bearing the name "Trump."

This colorful collection is mostly self-explanatory but the artist plans to present each object with a museum-like label not unlike in a curiosity cabinet or an anthropological study room.

Of particular interest are more than fifty magazines with Donald Trump on the cover. Although, most of the magazines are ten, twenty or more years old, there are some more recent ones including a copy of The Atlantic from June 2016 with the cover story, "The Mind Of Donald Trump," Time Magazine's issue "Deal with it" from August 21, 2015 and another Time Magazine dated March 14, 2016 with the words "bully, showman, party crasher and demagogue" written across Donald Trump's face.

All three magazines are signed by Donald Trump.

Also included are several high priced special edition items made for VIP's such as a beautiful Taj Mahal leather jacket and a Taj Mahal Golf Bag and Clubs as well as a 1994 Trump Castle Casino Birthday Invitation titled, "Trump, Lord Of The Financial Jungle."

The centerpiece of the installation is a sizable portrait of Donald Trump taken by Andres Serrano in 2004 for his "America" series and a giant rotating sculpture below it. The sculpture, which is more than 10 feet tall, is the word, EGO, spelled vertically, an elegant sign that once greeted visitors at the entrance of Trump's Taj Mahal Casino's Ego Lounge.

Finally, there are several board games including "Trump Monopoly," "The Apprentice Game" and "Trump: The Game."

The premise of "The Game" is stated on the box.

"It's not whether you win or lose, it's whether you win."

There are different versions of "The Game," including one in French, all to be laid out in several locations in the gallery under glass.

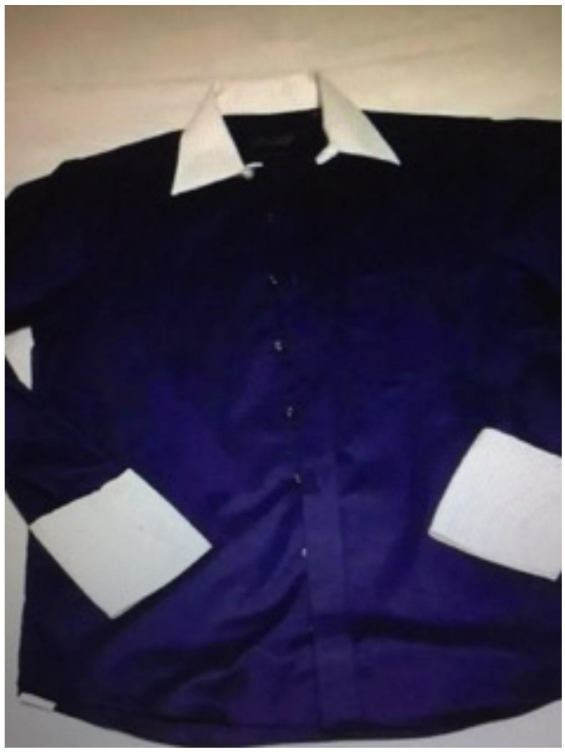
What kind of game was it, or is it? Who wins, and who loses?

That's for the audience to decide. The artist prefers to stay neutral.

"It's a portrait of a man painted with his own brushes," says Andres Serrano.

Donald Trump Signature Collection crest Striped 100% Silk Neck Ties

Donald Trump Signature Collection Dress Shirt



Trump Taj Mahal Sweatshirt

Trump International Hotel And Tower Las Vegas Hoodie

Trump Castle Jacket

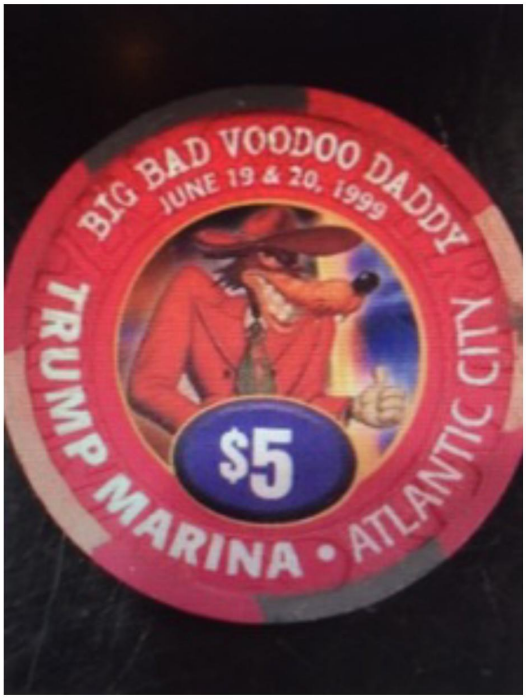
1990 Trump Taj Mahal Leather Jacket.
Given to a select few when the casino opened. One of 200 made.

Trump Ice Water

Donald Trump - 20 Years in Atlantic City 2003, Coca-Cola Full 6 Pack

Trump Marina Casino Chip - FIRST LADY MELANIA, Atlantic City, NJ

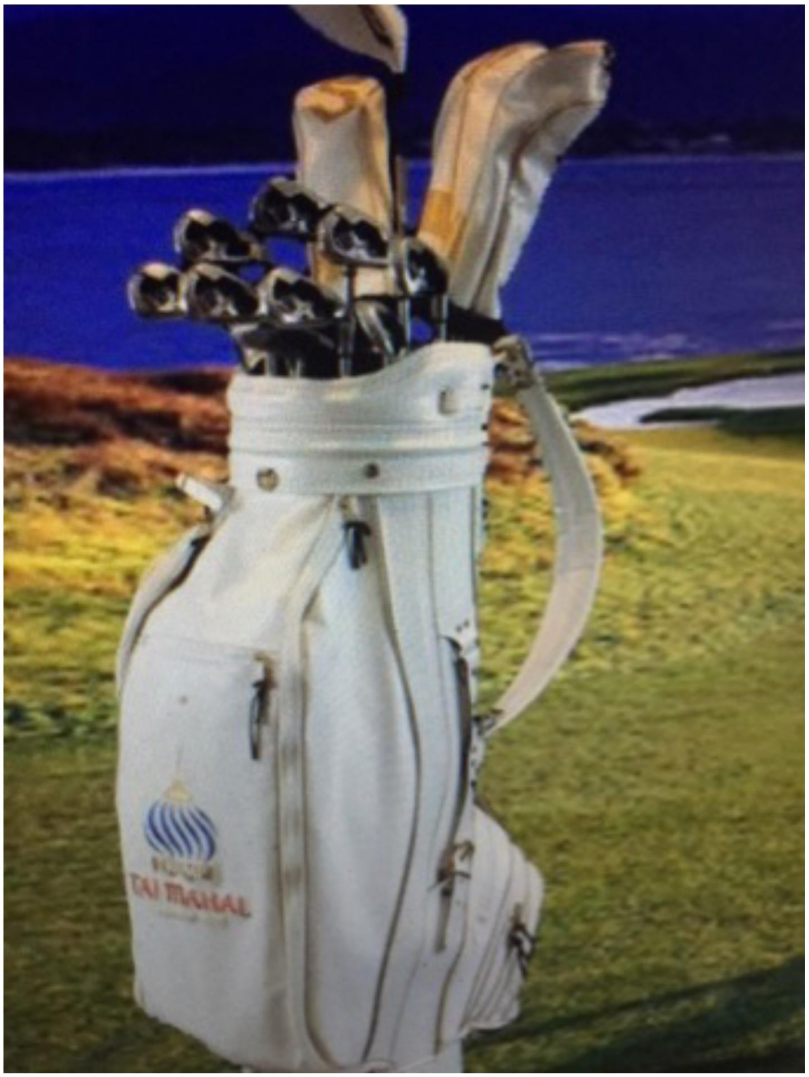
Trump Marina Casino Chip - BIG BAD VOODOO DADDY - Atlantic City, NJ



Trump Plaza Casino Chip - BLESS OUR TROOPS - Atlantic City, NJ

Trump Taj Mahal Collectable Golf Bag White

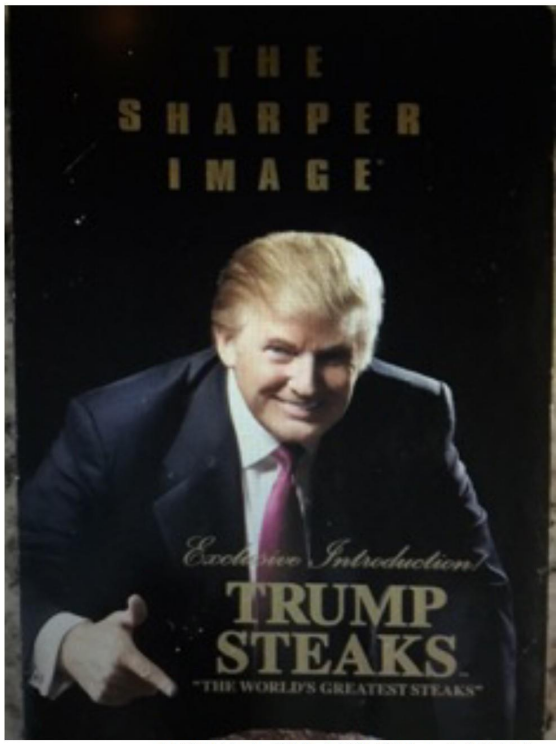
Burton Tour Bag commemorating Trump Taj Mahal grand opening, April 1990.
Comes with matching rain hood and head covers. Grand opening gift for VIP's.



TRUMP STEAKS - "THE WORLD GREATEST STEAKS" 2007

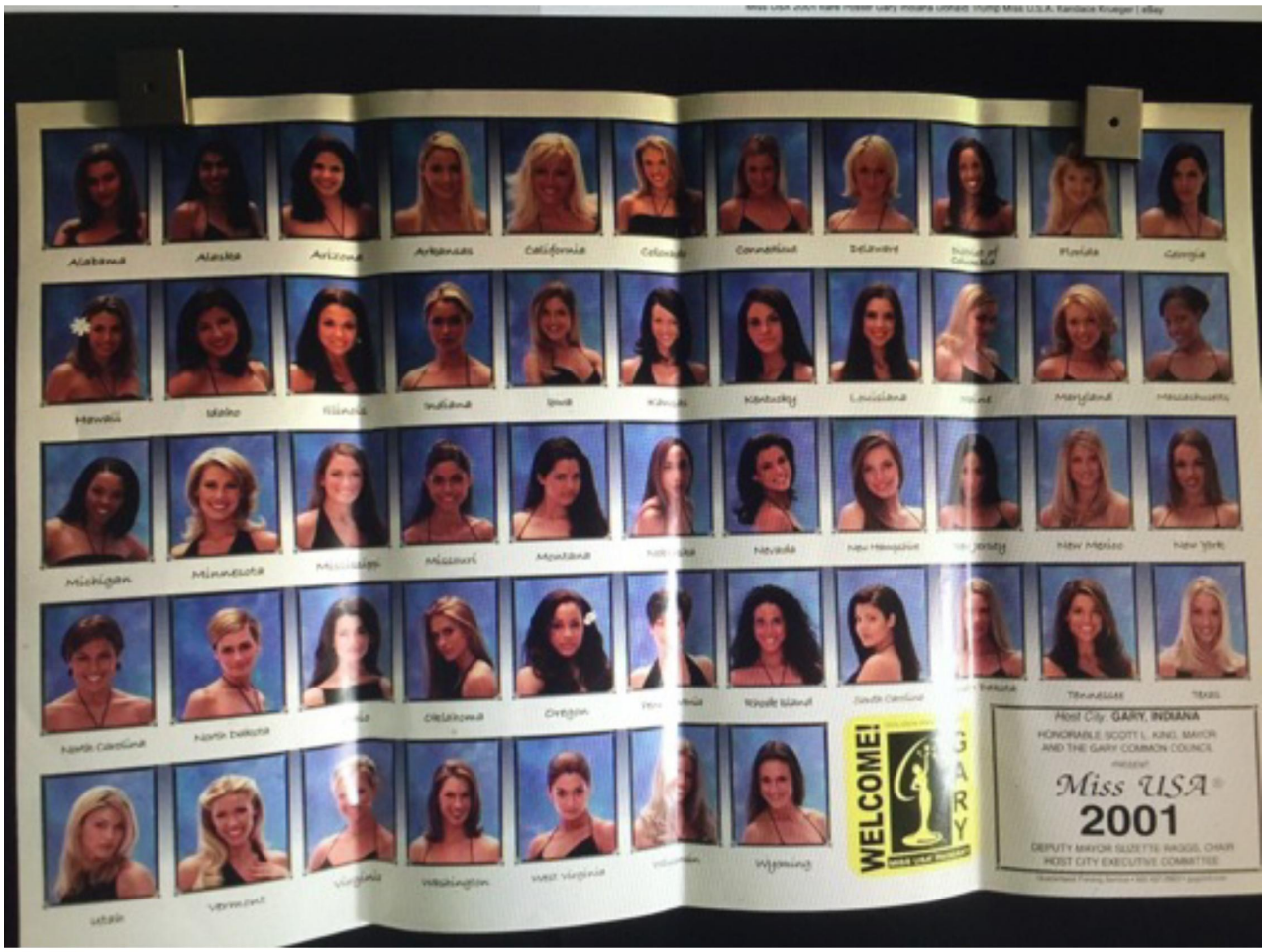
Donald Trump registered "Trump Steaks" as a U.S. trademark in August 2006.[5] Trump Steaks were launched on May 8, 2007, exclusively through The Sharper Image catalog, stores, and website as part of a three-month trial period. Trump Steaks were only sold at The Sharper Image for two months before being discontinued.

TRUMP STEAKS Brochure from The Sharper Image 2007

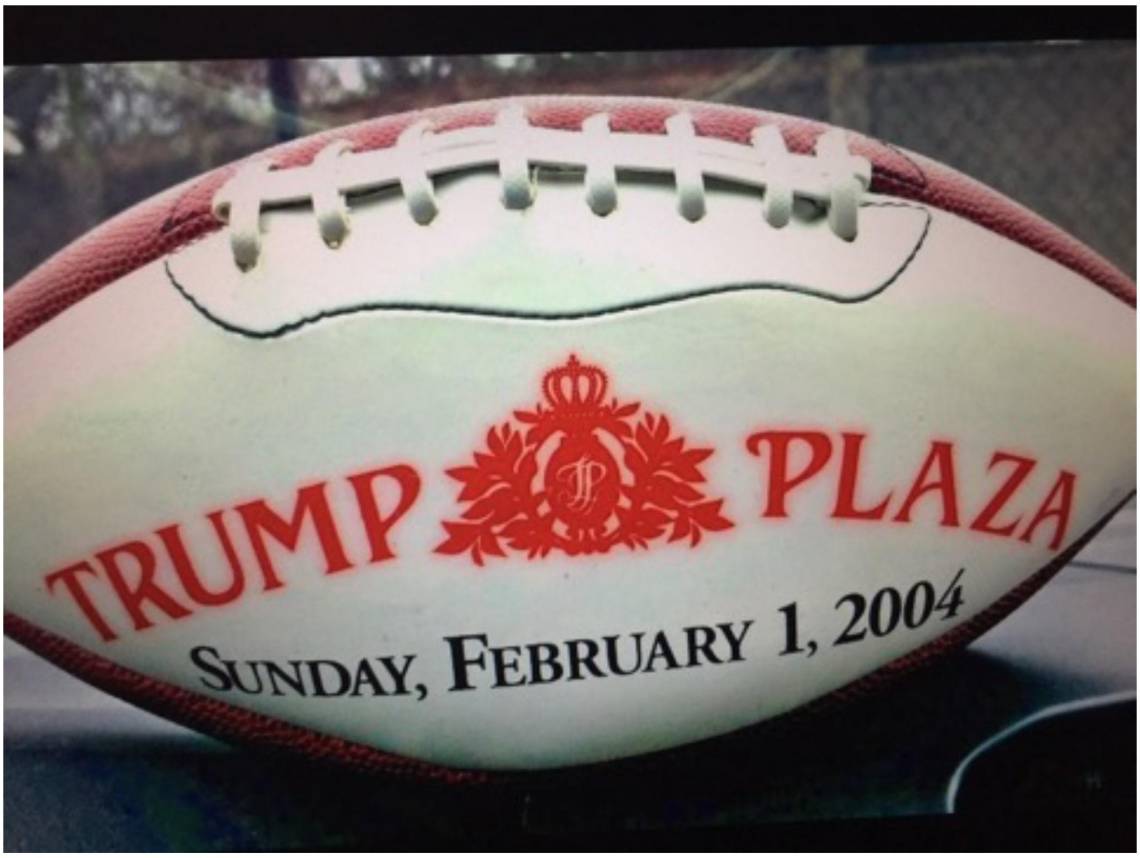


Miss USA 2001
Gary, Indiana

The Pageant was owned by Donald Trump from 1996 to 2015



Trump Plaza Super Bowl Football
"Sunday, February 1, 2004"

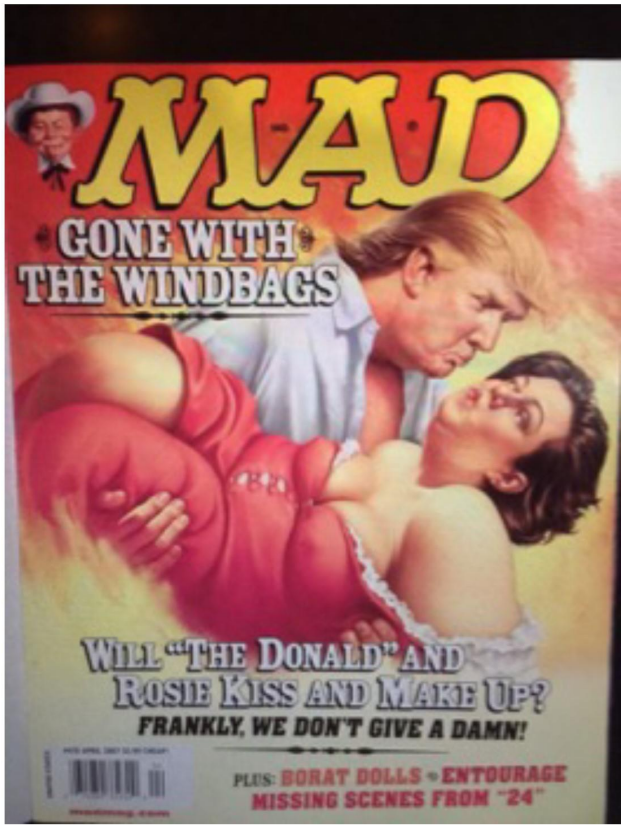


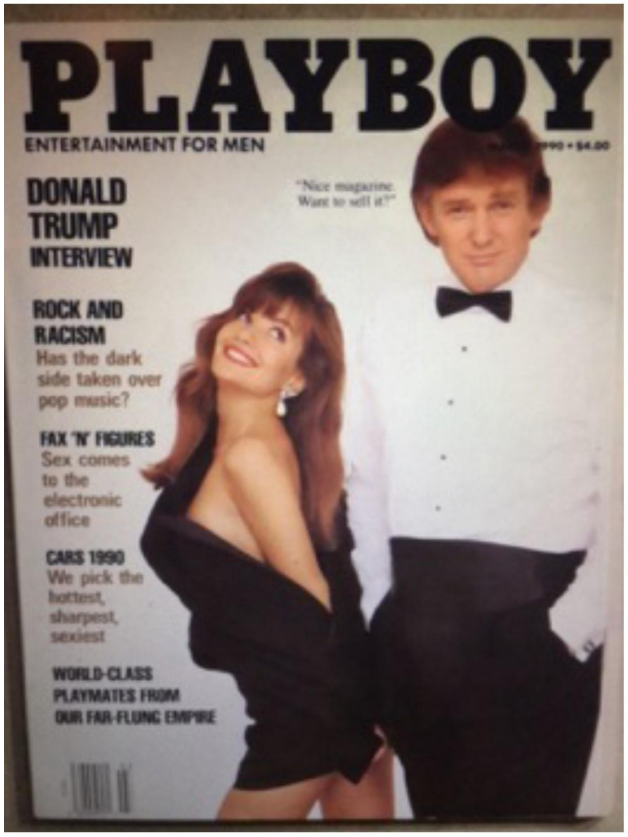
2006 Trump Vodka -750ml 24K Bottle

"Success" Deodorant Stick for Men by Donald Trump, 2.5 oz

Trump Plaza Casino - "Cash Money Tuxedo Teddy Bear"
1999

Crimestoppers' guide to those Dick Tracy villains
People weekly
POOR DONALD!
First a mid-life crisis, then public humiliation. Here's how the brash billionaire's longing for money, love and respect brought him crashing down


MAD
GONE WITH THE WINDBAGS
WILL "THE DONALD" AND ROSIE KISS AND MAKE UP?
FRANKLY, WE DON'T GIVE A DAMN!
PLUS: BORAT DOLLS • ENTOURAGE MISSING SCENES FROM "24"


PLAYBOY
ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN
DONALD TRUMP INTERVIEW
"Nice magazine. Want to sell it?"
ROCK AND RACISM
Has the dark side taken over pop music?
FAX 'N' FIGURES
Sex comes to the electronic office
CARS 1990
We pick the hottest, sharpest, sexiest
WORLD-CLASS PLAYMATES FROM OUR FAR-FLUNG EMPIRE

WORKING-CLASS HERO / WAR OF THE SEXES
Newsweek
TRUMPNADO

1994

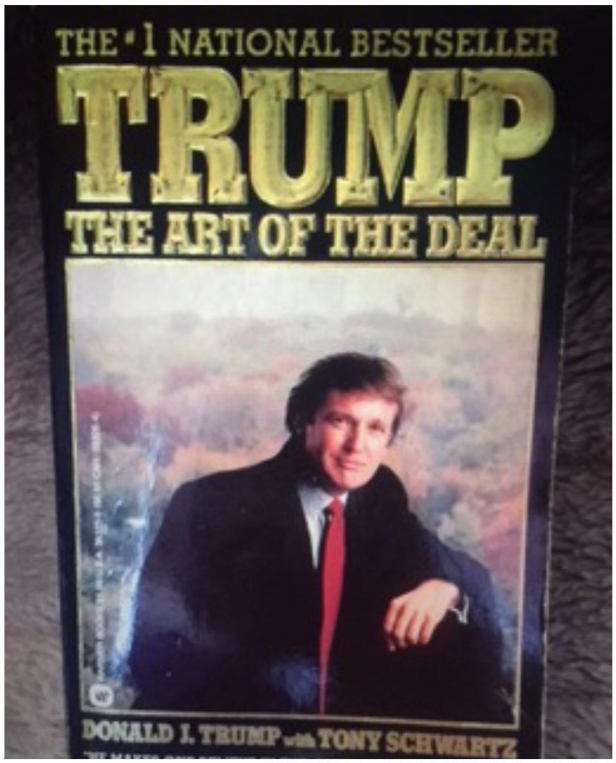
July 28, 2017

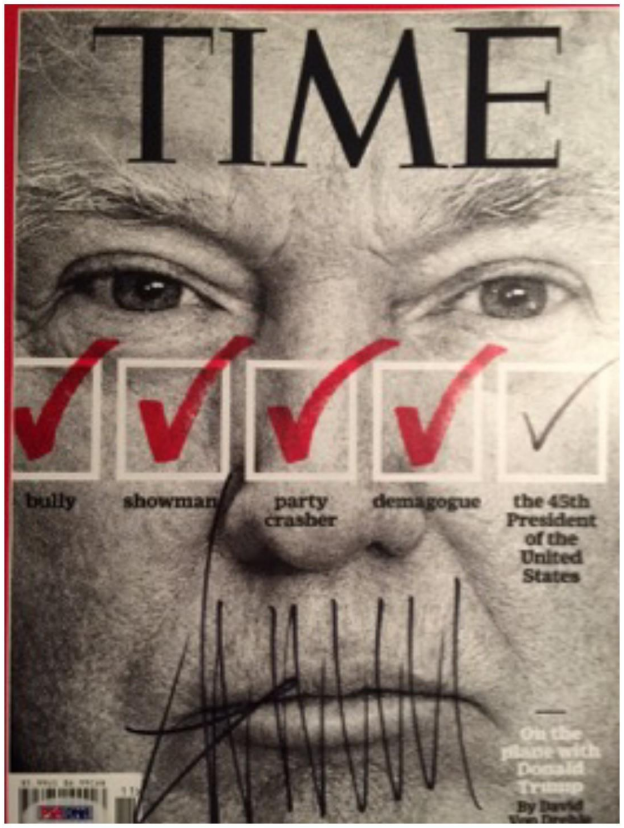
1994 Poster
"Trump, Lord Of The Financial Jungle"

In 1994, this poster was sent to High Rollers inviting them to a Birthday Party for Donald Trump. The party was held in the Crystal Ballroom at the Trump Castle.

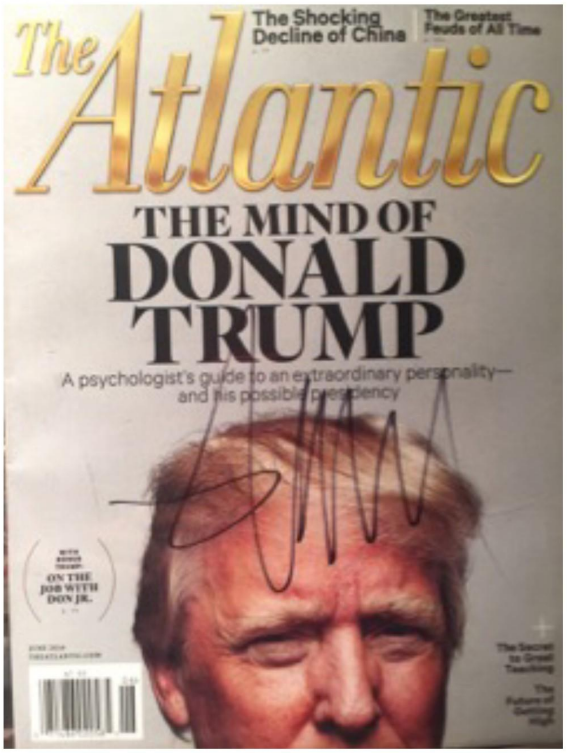
Donald Trump: The Man, the Myth, the Scandal by Joel Reed, published by Masquerade Books, 1990, 1st printing

Trump: The Art of The Deal By: Donald Trump With Tony Schwartz (1987)




TIME
bully
showman
party crasher
demagogue
the 45th President of the United States
On the plane with Donald Trump

Deal with it


The Atlantic
The Shocking Decline of China
The Greatest Feuds of All Time
THE MIND OF DONALD TRUMP
A psychologist's guide to an extraordinary personality—and his possible presidency
ON THE JOB WITH DON JR.

Donald Trump "The Game. I'm Back & You're Fired" Vintage Board Game Donald 2004

"THE GAME"

Donald TRUMP The Game 1989 Vintage Milton Bradley Board Game

Chairs and Table from Trump Plaza Casino

Taj Mahal EGO Lounge Sign - Trump Hotel and Casino

“Donald Trump, 2004 (America)”

Andres Serrano

On Jun 8, 2018, at 8:36 AM, jeffrey E. <jeevacation@gmail.com> wrote:

1 madonna on the way 2. Instead of torture photo. , maybe portrait of me instead? 3. Presentation of trumpville?

--

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Offering Memorandum

GSA Joint Venture Equity Financing & Pre-Sale Acquisition Opportunity

19-F Smith Bay Road | St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

New Construction Build-To-Suit Property | U.S. Citizenship & Immigrations Services Facility
GSA Guaranteed Lease (S&P Rated AA+)

Atlanta
Chicago
New York
Houston
Los Angeles
Miami
Phoenix
San Francisco
Tulsa

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This Confidential Memorandum has been prepared by Stan Johnson Company ("SJC") and is being furnished to you solely for the purpose of your review of the commercial property located at 19-F Smith Bay Rd, St Thomas 00802, US Virgin Islands (the "Property"). The material contained in this Offering Memorandum shall be used for the purposes of evaluating the Property for acquisition and shall not be used for any purpose or made available to any other person without the express written consent of Stan Johnson Company ("Broker").

By accepting the Confidential Memorandum, you acknowledge and agree that: (1) all of the information contained herein and any other information you will be receiving in connection with this transaction, whether oral, written or in any other form (collectively, the "Materials"), is confidential; (2) you will not reproduce the Confidential Memorandum in whole or in part; (3) if you do not wish to pursue this matter, you will return this Confidential Memorandum to SJC as soon as practicable together with all other materials relating to the Property which you may have received from SJC; and (4) any proposed actions by you which are inconsistent in any manner with the foregoing agreements will require the prior written consent of SJC.

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Property Overview & Pricing & Financial Overview 6

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USVI Lic #1-10718-1B

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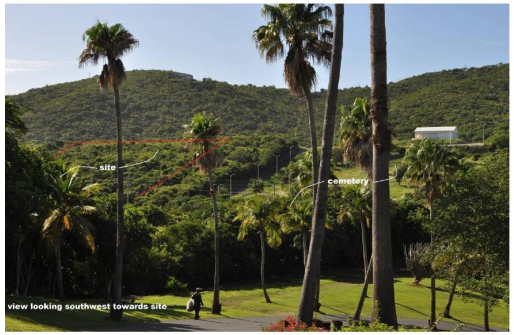
P: 312.240.0127 | F: 312.240.0158

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018729

Section 1:
Executive Summary



Subject Property Site

The Offering

Stan Johnson Company is pleased to offer to qualified investors, on behalf of Ownership, a unique pre-sale/ JV investment & acquisition opportunity for a 100% fee simple interest in a brand new, to-be-built General Services Administration (GSA) facility. The Property is leased to the U.S. Government and is occupied by the Citizenship and Immigrations Services (CIS) agency, and is located on the island of St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The proposed deal structure is a forward commitment acquisition, with the purchaser funding 100% of development costs, receiving a preferred rate of return on their outstanding equity during development, and subsequently purchasing the property upon rent commencement at a pre-determined cap rate. Ownership closed on the purchase of the underlying land in mid-2014 and is ready to start construction immediately. Qualified investors are encouraged to submit bids outlining their proposed terms & structure, to be reviewed by Ownership.

The Property will be developed on an exceptionally well located site. It will be a 100% occupied, free standing, two-story office property of approximately 12,770 square feet on 1.89 acres. The site is located in Smith Bay on the East side of the island of St. Thomas in the US, Virgin Islands. The GSA will be operating under a new, 10-year base lease term.

The subject Property is mission critical to CIS as it will house a consolidation of multiple CIS facilities including current facilities in St. Croix and Charlotte Amalie. The Property will serve as the CIS center for the entire St. Thomas region to welcome and educate future US citizens. The Property is a unique opportunity for an investor to acquire a new construction property 100% leased to the GSA, while earning additional income through funding of development costs.

Investment Highlights

100% Leased to and Guaranteed by the US General Services Administration - Property to house the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services agency

Class A Asset with Long Term Residual Value – Property will be a modern two-story split level, state of the art, public office facility, built to withstand a CAT V hurricane

Brand New 10-Year Base Lease Term - Newly signed 10-year lease, which is non-cancellable for the first ten years, at a full service rate of $49.55 per RSF

Mission Critical Facility – The subject Property is truly mission critical as it will house a consolidation of multiple CIS facilities and serves as the CIS center for the entire St. Thomas region to welcome and educate future US citizens

Strong Developer Track Record of GSA Projects – The developer, Hoover Properties, has successfully completed 29 different build-to-suit developments for the U.S. Government for a wide range of agencies. Inquire with broker for additional information.

GSA's Financial Contribution to Tenant Improvements - The GSA is contributing almost $1 million toward interior buildout at the Property, well in excess of the developer's $665,000 contribution

LEED® Certified Building – The Property's interior space will be constructed to meet the requirements of LEED for Commercial Interiors

Property Overview

Property:	Citizenship & Immigration Services Building (GSA)
Tenant:	United States of America, General Services Administration (Standard & Poors credit rating of AA+)
Property Address:	19-F Estate Smith Bay, Smith Bay Road St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands
Year Built:	Estimated 2015 or Early 2016
Rentable SF:	12,770 SF
Parcel No:	19F-E
Zoning:	B-2 (Per Zoning Act #27-0138)
Lot Size:	+/- 1.89 Acres
Occupancy:	100%
Encumbrances:	None, Delivered Free and Clear
Ownership Type:	Fee Simple; Build-to-suit
Lease Type:	Gross as to Operating Expenses. Real Estate Taxes pass-through over fully assessed base year
Parking Spaces:	41+ Spaces

Pricing & Financial Overview

19-F Smith Bay Rd | St Thomas 00802, US Virgin Islands	
Offering Terms:	Forward Commitment (Pre-Sale/JV) Acquisition, with Purchaser funding 100% of development costs, receiving a Preferred Rate of Return on Outstanding Equity during Development, and Purchasing the Property upon Rent Commencement at a Pre- Determined Cap Rate
Offering Forward Commitment Cap Rate & Purchase Price:	Contact Listing Agent
Development Equity Requirement:	Contact Listing Agent
Investor Development Preferred Return:	Contact Listing Agent
Equity Initial Funding Date:	Q4 2014
Investor Acquisition Date:	(est.) Q2 2016

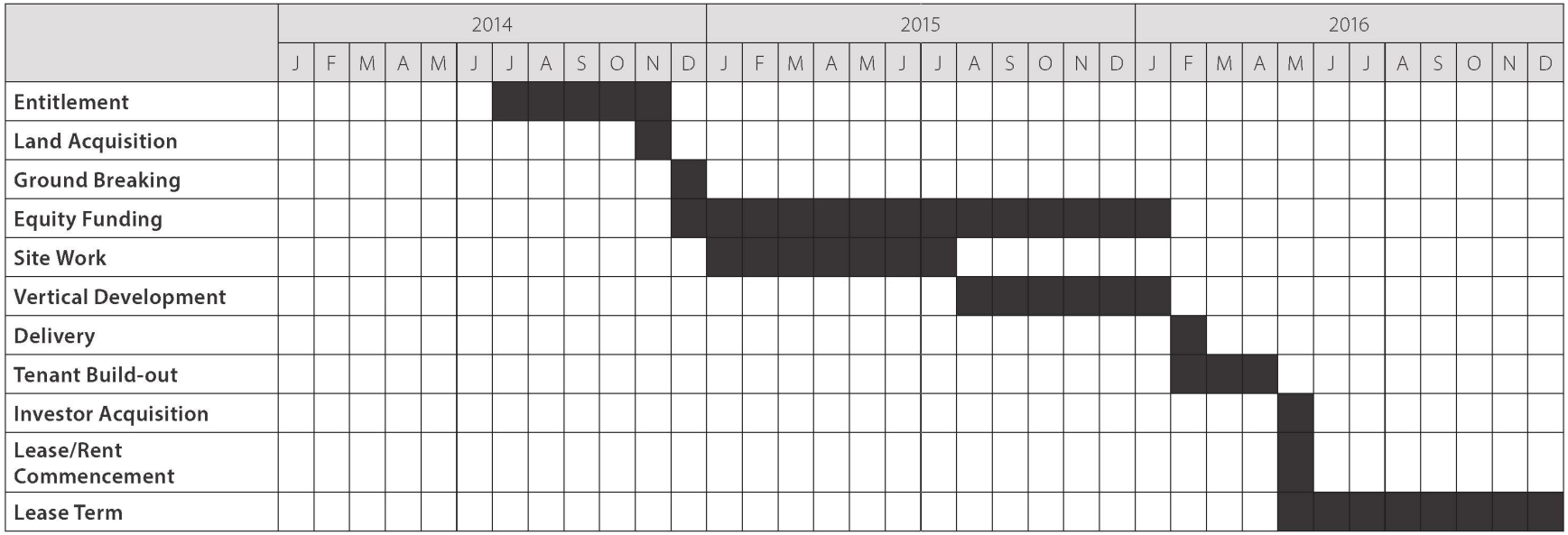
Section 2:
Financial Summary

SOURCES & USES OF FUNDS

Use Of Funds:	Total	% of Total
Land Costs	$1,113,393	16.72%
Hard Project Costs	$5,780,914	86.82%
Soft Costs	$748,247	11.24%
GSA TI Reimbursement	($983,797)	(14.77%)
Total Uses	**$6,658,757**	**100.00%**

Source Of Funds:	Total	% of Total
Investor Equity	$1,618,757	24.31%
Loan	$5,040,000	75.69%
Total Sources	**$6,658,757**	**100%**

CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE



Stan Johnson Company | THE NET LEASE AUTHORITY®

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018734

Pro Forma NOI

Item	PSF*	Year 1
Gross Potential Income (GPI)	$45.21	$577,344
- Vacancy and Collection Loss	$0.00	$0
= Net Rent Revenue	**$45.21**	**$577,344**
+ Operating Cost Rent Adjustment	$4.34	$55,412
= Effective Gross Income (EGI)	**$49.55**	**$632,756.1**
- Total Operating Expenses	$9.24	$118,052
= Net Operating Income (NOI)	**$40.31**	**$514,704**

Operating Expenses

Utilities		
Heat	$0.00	$0
Electric	$0.00	$0
Water and Sewer	$0.15	$1,915
Total Utilities	**$0.15**	**$1,915**
Maintenance		
Landscaping	$0.74	$9,493
Janitorial	$1.27	$16,155
Painting and Decorating	$0.10	$1,277
Maintenance Labor	$0.00	$0
Maintenance Contract	$0.73	$9,271
Plumbing	$0.20	$2,554
Electrical	$0.20	$2,554
Land Lease	$0.00	$0
Total Maintenance	$3.23	$41,304
Administration		
Management Fee	$0.99	$12,655
Personnel Expense	$0.00	$0
Office Supplies	$0.00	$0
Telephone	$0.00	$0
Marketing	$0.00	$0
Total Administration	$0.99	$12,655
Fixed Expenses		
Insurance	$3.11	$39,762
Real Estate Taxes	$1.61	$20,500
Replacement Reserves	$0.15	$1,916
Total Fixed Expenses	$4.87	$62,178
=		
Total Operating Expenses	**$9.24**	**$118,052**

* Building SF = 12,770 SF

Section 3:
Property Summary

Lease Abstract

Property Address:	19-F Estate Smith Bay, Smith Bay Road
Tenant:	U.S.A., General Services Administration US Department of Homeland Security Citizenship and Immigration Services
Property Type:	2 Story, Built-to-Suit Office
Building Area (SF):	12,770 RSF
Lot Size (Acres):	1.89 Acres
Year Built:	To-be-built
Lease/Rent Commencement:	Upon building completion
Lease/Rent Expiration:	10 years after building completion
Base Lease Term:	10 years
Base Lease Term Remaining:	10 Years
Current Annual Rent:	$632,756.05
Amortized Tenant Improvements (annual):	$55,433.62
Rental Increases (in base term):	None
Renewal Options:	None
Lease Type:	Modified Gross - Tenant pays increases in taxes over a base year that will be established upon full assessment
Expense Detail:	Operating Expenses are full service, exclusive of tenant electric. GSA pays adjusted rent annually based on a base rate for occupancy cost of $4.3393 per RSF ($55,412.40) times % change in CPI
Ownership Type:	Fee Simple; Build-to-suit
ROFR/Right of First Offer:	None
Termination Option:	None
Parking:	41 spaces, of which 4 shall be reserved for Government employees
LEED:	Tenant space will be built to meet requirements of LEED for Commercial Interiors

St. Thomas, USVI

USCIS

Tenant Overview

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS" or "CIS") is a component of the **United States Department of Homeland Security** (DHS), which in turn is under the General Services Administration (GSA). It performs many administrative functions formerly carried out by the former **United States Immigration and Naturalization Service** (INS), which was part of the Department of Justice.

The stated priorities of the USCIS are to promote national security, to eliminate immigration case backlogs, and to improve customer services. USCIS is headed by a director, currently Leon Rodriguez, who reports directly to the Deputy Secretary for Homeland Security. USCIS consists of 18,000 federal employees and contractors working at 250 offices around the world.

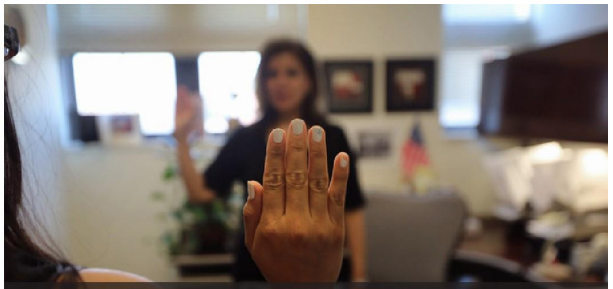
USCIS is charged with processing immigrant visa petitions, naturalization petitions, and asylum and refugee applications, as well as making adjudicative decisions performed at the service centers, and managing all other immigration benefits functions (i.e., not immigration enforcement).

USCIS' official website is USCIS.gov which includes an online appointment scheduling service known as INFOPASS. This system allows people with questions about immigration to come into their local USCIS office and speak directly with a government employee about their case. Additionally, USCIS maintains a blog entitled "The Beacon" as well as the "@uscis" Twitter account.

Unlike most other federal agencies, USCIS is funded almost entirely by user fees. Under President George W. Bush's FY2008 budget request, direct congressional appropriations made about 1% of the USCIS budget and about 99% of the budget was funded through fees. The total USCIS FY2008 budget was projected to be $2.6 billion.

Exceptional Credit Tenancy –
Boasting an "AA+" credit rating by S&P and an "Aaa" credit rating by Moody's, the lease is guaranteed by the United States of America.

High Renewal Probability –
The General Services Administration's lease renewal probability is 96% in new, first generation space such as the Property, and the GSA remains in its space for over 25 years on average.



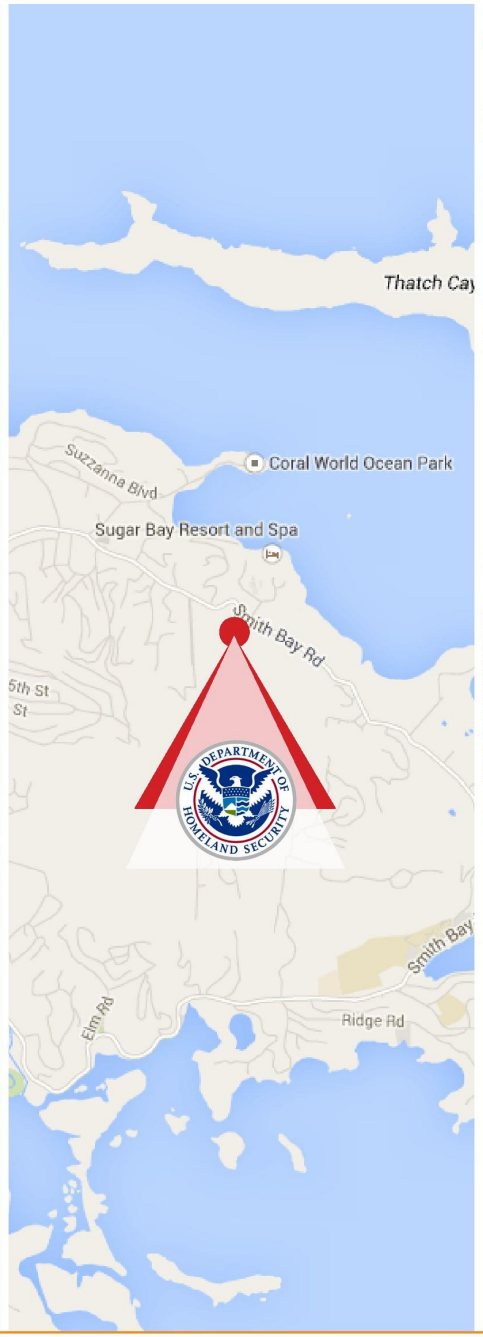
United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

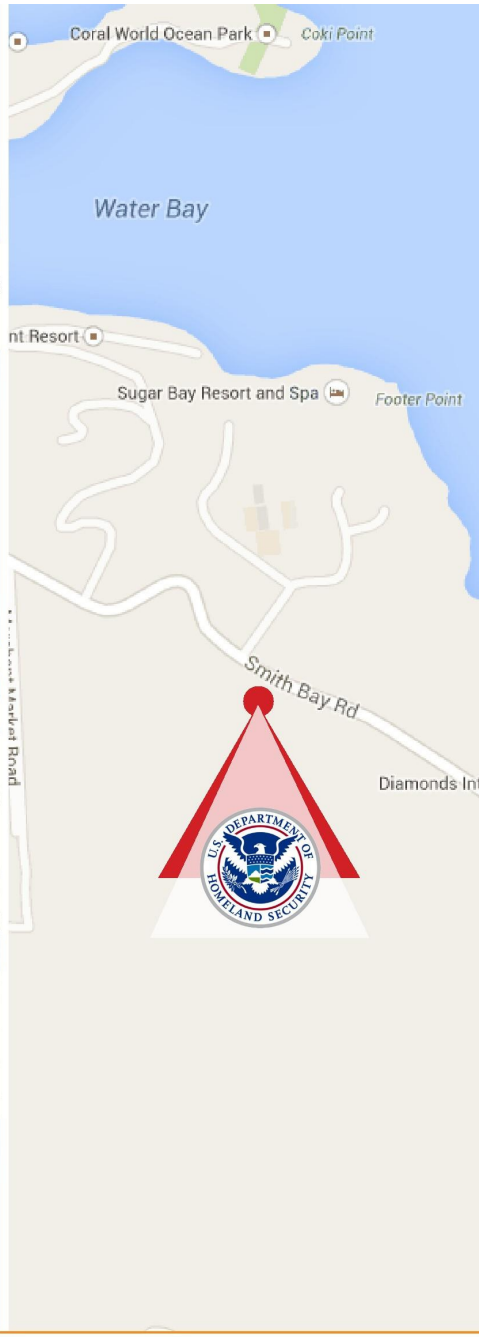
Site Plan

Citizenship and Immigration Services
12,770 SF Facility to-be Constructed 2015-2016
Mission-Critical, Consolidation of CIS Offices –
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

N

Turks and Caicos Islands
Banes
Holguin
Guantanamo
Bayamo
Santiago de Cuba
Cap-Haitien
Santiago De Los Caballeros
Haiti
Dominican Republic
Port-au-Prince
Bani
La Romana
Punta Cana
San Juan
Puerto Rico
Caribbean Sea
N
Aruba
Curacao
Punto Fijo
Coro
Barranquilla
Google


Thatch Cay
Coral World Ocean Park
Suzanna Blvd
Sugar Bay Resort and Spa
Smith Bay Rd
Ridge Rd
Elm Rd


Coral World Ocean Park
Coki Point
Water Bay
Sugar Bay Resort and Spa
Footer Point
Smith Bay Rd
Diamonds In

Location Overview

Saint Thomas is an island in the Caribbean Sea – directly east of Puerto Rico. Together with St. John and Water Island, St. Thomas forms a county and constituent district of the United States Virgin Islands (USVI), an unincorporated territory of the United States. Located on the island of Saint Thomas is the territorial capital and port of Charlotte Amalie. As of the 2010 census, the population of Saint Thomas was 51,634 about 48.5% of the US Virgin Islands total. The district has a land area of 31.24 square miles.

In 1917, St. Thomas was purchased (along with Saint John and Saint Croix) by the United States for $25 million in gold, as part of a defensive strategy to maintain control over the Caribbean and the Panama Canal during the First World War. U.S. citizenship was granted to the residents of St. Thomas in 1927 and the U.S. Department of the Interior took over administrative duties in 1931. American forces were based on the island during the Second World War and the 1954, passage of the U.S. Virgin Islands Organic Act officially granted territorial status to the three islands - St. Thomas, St. John, and Water Island.

St. Thomas has a lively tourist trade. It is the USVI's most cosmopolitan island, yet it still retains the distinctive atmosphere of a secluded Caribbean paradise. St. Thomas is packed with many tourism activities including shopping, sailing, snorkeling, sightseeing, diving and dining. The Island is home to a world-renowned golf course, picture-perfect beaches and a spectacular nightlife. Other attractions are the Skyride (700 feet above the city) and the famous 99 Steps of Charlotte Amalie for an incomparable view of the Caribbean, as well as the second-oldest synagogue in the Western Hemisphere, the 1680-built Fort Christian.

St. Thomas is developed with many hotels offering a variety of lodging alternatives from grand resort estates to small inns and villas. It is also a destination for many Caribbean cruises due to the Island's breathtaking views, secluded beaches and a deeply relaxing atmosphere.

St. Thomas

St. Thomas

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Stan Johnson Company

THE NET LEASE AUTHORITY®

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An Iconic Offering

A 38.5 Acre Development Site on the Las Vegas Strip

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An independently owned and operated member of the CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD ALLIANCE

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Confidentiality & Conditions

This is a confidential Offering Memorandum intended solely for your limited use and benefit in determining whether you desire to express any further interest in the purchase of the 38.5-acre site ("the Property").

This Offering Memorandum was prepared by Cushman & Wakefield and Commerce Real Estate Solutions ("Cushman & Wakefield") and has been reviewed by representatives of the owners of The Property ("the Ownership"). It contains selected information pertaining to the Property and does not purport to be all-inclusive or to contain all of the information that prospective purchasers may desire. It should be noted that all information provided is for general reference purposes only in that such information is based on assumptions relating to the general economy, competition, and other factors beyond the control of Ownership and, therefore, is subject to material variation. Additional information and an opportunity to inspect the Property will be made available to interested and qualified prospective purchasers. Neither Ownership nor Cushman & Wakefield nor any of their respective officers have made any representation or warranty, express or implied, as to the accuracy or completeness of this Offering Memorandum, any of its contents, or any other materials provided as a courtesy to facilitate prospective purchaser's own investigations of the Property, and no legal commitments or obligations shall arise by reason of this Offering Memorandum, its contents or any further information provided by Cushman & Wakefield regarding the Property.

It is essential that all parties to real estate transactions be aware of the health, liability and economic impact of environmental factors on real estate. Cushman & Wakefield does not conduct investigations or analyses of environmental matters and, accordingly, urges its clients to retain qualified environmental professionals to determine whether hazardous or toxic wastes or substances (such as asbestos, PCB's and other contaminants or petro-chemical products stored in underground tanks) or other undesirable materials or conditions are present at the Property and, if so, whether any health danger or other liability exists. Such substances may have been used in the construction or operation of buildings or may be present as a result of previous activities at the Property.

Various laws and regulations have been enacted at the federal, state and local levels dealing with the use, storage, handling, removal, transport and disposal of toxic or hazardous wastes and substances. Depending upon past, current and proposed uses of the Property, it may be prudent to retain an environmental expert to conduct a site investigation and/or building inspection. If such substances exist or are contemplated to be used at the Property, special governmental approvals or permits may be required. In addition, the cost of removal and disposal of such materials may be substantial. Consequently, legal counsel and technical experts should be consulted where these substances are or may be present.

Ownership and Cushman & Wakefield expressly reserve the right, at their sole discretion, to reject any or all expressions of interest or offers to purchase the Property and/or terminate discussions with any entity at any time with or without notice. Ownership shall have no legal commitment or obligation to any entity reviewing this Offering Memorandum or making an offer to purchase the Property unless and until a written commitment to purchase the Property has been fully executed, delivered and approved by Ownership and any conditions to Ownership's obligations thereunder have been satisfied or waived. Except for representations and warranties expressly set forth in such definitive, executed purchase and sale agreement, Ownership makes and will make no representations and warranties regarding the Property and any prospective purchaser must rely entirely on its own investigations and those of its agents and consultants.

By receipt of this Offering Memorandum, you agree that this Offering Memorandum and its contents are of a confidential nature, that you will hold and treat it in the strictest confidence, and that you will not disclose this Offering Memorandum or any of its contents to any other entity without the prior written authorization of Ownership nor will you use this Offering Memorandum or any of its contents in any fashion or manner detrimental to the interest of Ownership or Cushman & Wakefield.

The terms and conditions stated in this section will relate to all of the sections of the Offering Memorandum as if stated independently therein. If, after reviewing this Offering Memorandum, you have no further interest in purchasing the Property at this time, kindly return this Offering Memorandum to Cushman & Wakefield at your earliest possible convenience. Photocopying or other duplication is not authorized.

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018744

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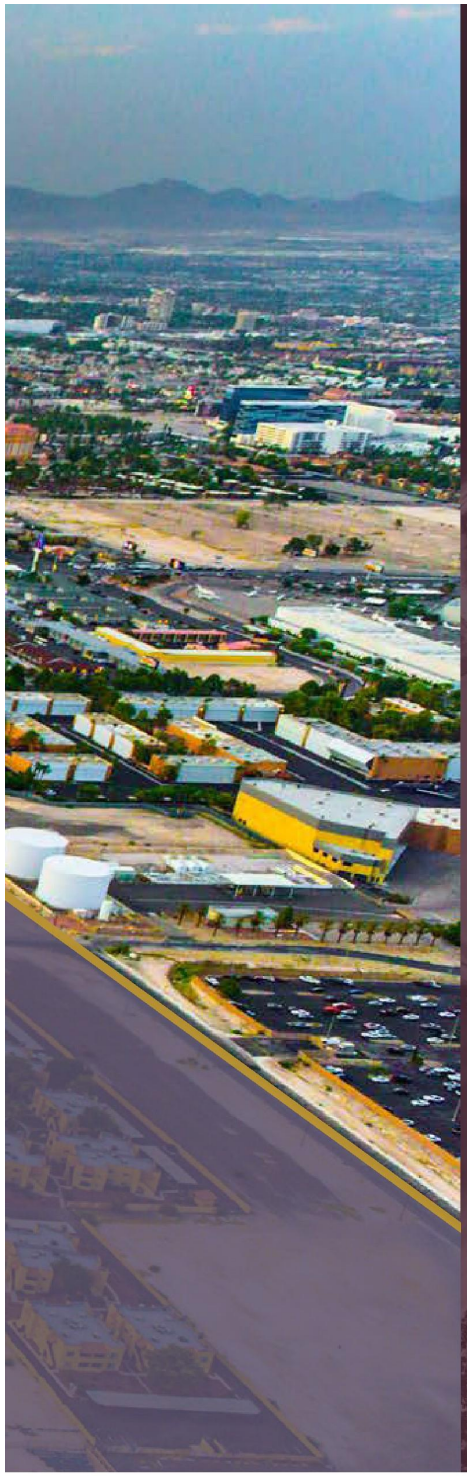
MANDALAY BAY
2nd Largest Hotel
4,752 Rooms
LUXOR
3rd Largest Hotel
4,408 Rooms
Excalibur
4th Largest Hotel
4,008 Rooms
CITYCENTER
NEW YORK
NEW YORK
MGM GRAND
The Largest Hotel
6,852 Rooms
Tropicana
MGM GRAND
THE LOT
MANDALAY BAY
505' FAA Approval
750' of Direct Frontage
Located adjacent to
4 of the 5 largest hotels
in North America



Executive Summary

The Offering

Cushman & Wakefield, Inc., as exclusive advisor, is pleased to offer for sale a remarkable 38.5-acre development site on the world famous Las Vegas Strip. Situated directly across from the Mandalay Bay Resort, an investor could obtain permits within approximately nine months to develop a visionary themed large-scale resort and gaming destination with up to 10,000 hotel rooms. An approved height allowance of up to 505 feet will make any future development on the Site the most highly visible on the Strip to the more than 42 million annual visitors travelling through McCarron International Airport. In addition private aircraft "high roller" terminals adjacent to the Site create a very unique opportunity to provide exclusive direct jet access points. Las Vegas gaming revenues, levels of new development, visitor volumes and visitor spending are all approaching record levels making the timing associated with the development of the Site extremely compelling.

Las Vegas possesses a unique international appeal that draws an incredible 3.5 million visitors each and every month. The growth in tourism is only expected to accelerate with McCarran International Airport anticipated to be the fifth fastest growing airport in the country over the next 10 years with passenger volume projected to reach 55 million. Las Vegas' growth is expected to be bolstered by a mix of additional seats by domestic and international carriers through more flights and larger aircraft and new service from international carriers including nonstop flights from China within three years. Over 4 million square feet of new convention space and more than $6 billion of new resort, retail and entertainment developments continue to elevate the overall "Las Vegas experience".

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018747

The Site

- Remarkable 38.5-acre site will support a themed, large-scale casino resort development
- Six to nine month approval process to break ground
- 750 feet of direct Strip frontage
- In-place income generated by existing buildings
- 505' of FAA approved height allowance fronting the Strip
- H-1 zoning flexibility allows for resort casino/gaming, luxury retail, multifamily, retail, timeshare
- Direct visibility to 42 million visitors traveling through McCarran International Airport
- Views to south will be unobstructed forever due to lower buildable height restrictions on the south
- Existing streets bounding all sides of the Site provide excellent access

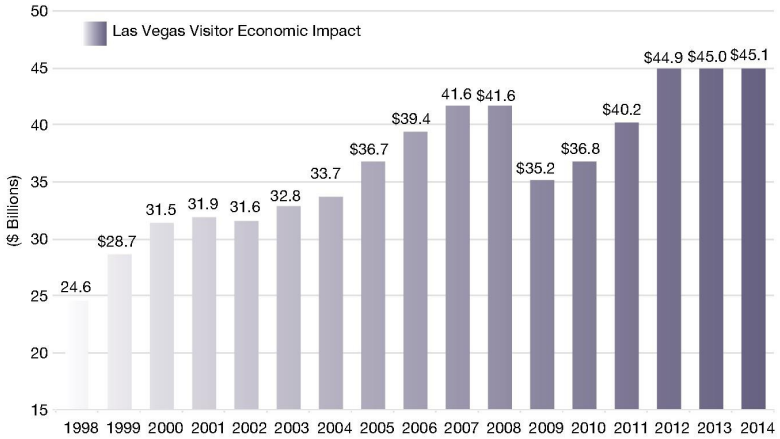
CONCEPTUAL PLANS FOR CASINO RESORT OF 9,360 ROOMS

Private Aircraft
"High Roller"
Terminals at LAS
Tropicana Ave
Reno Ave
Tropicana
MGM Grand
The Lot
Triple 5
Development
Project
Las Vegas Blvd
Excalibur
4th Largest Hotel
4,008 Rooms
LUXOR
3rd Largest Hotel
4,408 Rooms
MANDALAY BAY
2nd Largest Hotel
4,752 Rooms
Convention Space
2.1 Million SF

Strong Las Vegas Economy Justifies New Development

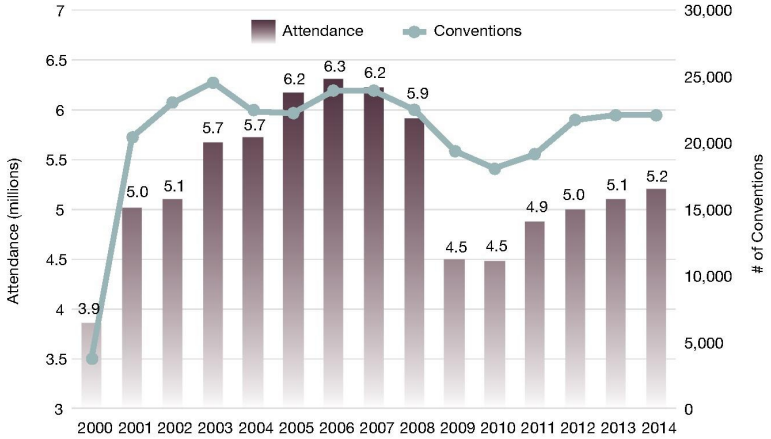
- $6 billion of under construction and planned Strip development is the greatest since 1950's
- $45.1 billion in annual visitor revenue during 2014, a new record
- 41.1 million visitors in 2014; 2015 is on track to hit 42 million, a new record
- 4 million square feet of new convention space under development, a new record
- $9.6 billion in gaming revenues in 2014 near peak 2007 levels
- Visitor volume projected to increase by 500,000 every year for the foreseeable future
- Average hotel occupancy is 92% on the Strip
- Tier One hotel ADR was $232 in 2014
- Nearly 650,000 new residents since 2000, representing 47% growth during the past decade
- 1.3 million more room nights were sold in 2014 over 2013

LAS VEGAS VISITOR ECONOMIC IMPACT 2000 - 2014



$45.1 Billion
Visitor Revenues hit New Record

LAS VEGAS CONVENTION STATISTICS



4,000,000 Square Feet
Convention Space under Construction to Accommodate Demand

Surrounded By World Class Retail

RETAILERS TO THE SOUTH

H&M

Saks Fifth Avenue

WHOLE FOODS

RETAILERS TO THE NORTH

Ermenegildo Zegna

TIFFANY & CO.

LOUIS VUITTON

Kiton

BVLGARI

GUCCI

Cartier

FENDI

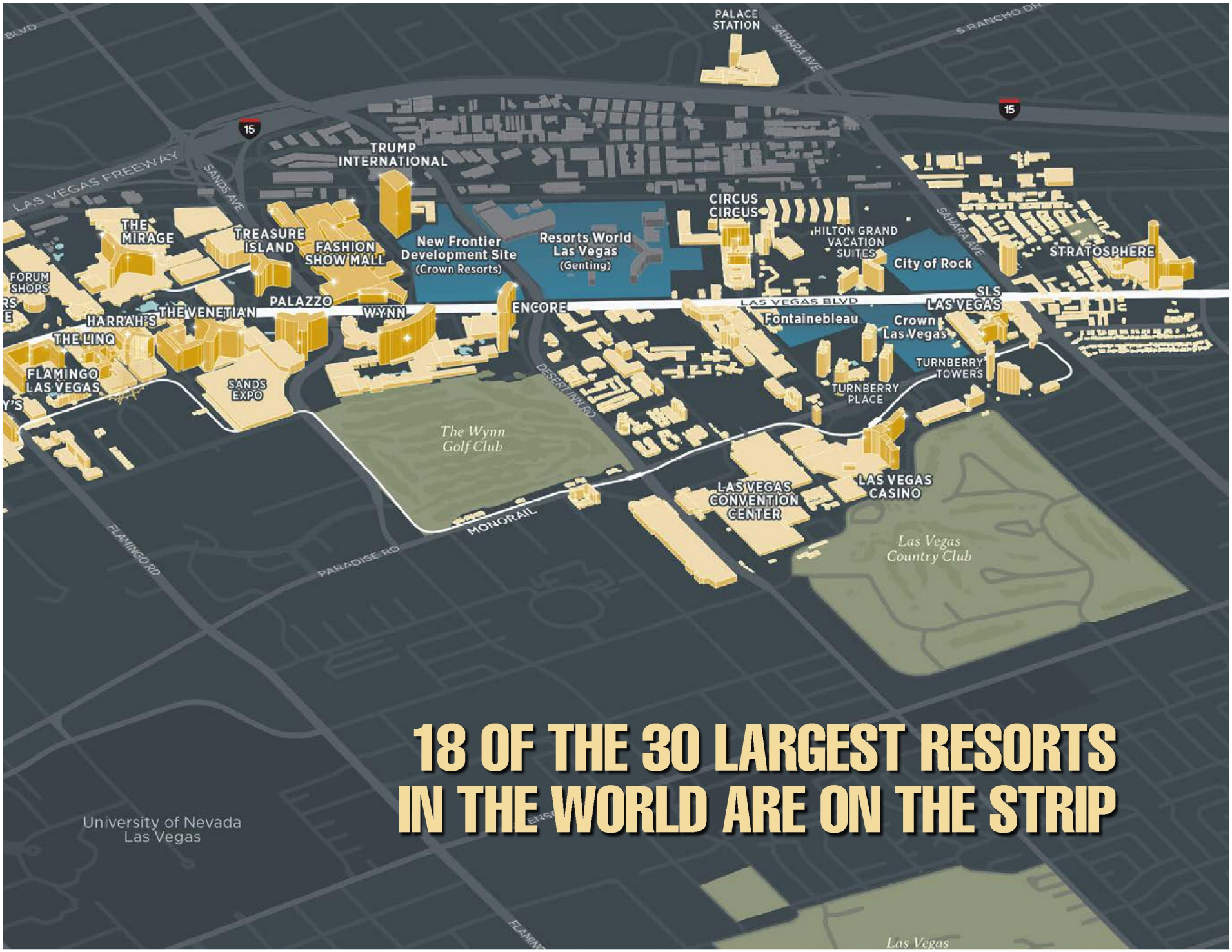
HERMÈS

Dior

PRADA

MIKIMOTO

PANORAMA TOWERS
VDARA
BELLAGIO
ARIA
COSMOPOLITAN
MONTE CARLO
CITY CENTER
THE SHOPS AT CRYSTALS
Las Vegas Arena/ The Park (2016)
NEW YORK NEW YORK
MANDARIN ORIENTAL
EXCALIBUR
THE STRIP
PARIS
PLANET HOLLYWOOD
LUXOR
MGM GRAND
THE SIGNATURE AT MGM GRAND
MONORAIL
MANDALAY BAY
TROPICANA
MGM "The Lot"
LAS VEGAS BLVD
WYNDHAM GRAND DESERT
Bali Hai Golf Club
Triple 5 Project
RUSSELL RD
SPRING VALLEY
KOVAL LN
HARMON AVE
TROPICANA AVE
15



18 OF THE 30 LARGEST RESORTS IN THE WORLD ARE ON THE STRIP

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE STRIP

$375 Million AEG-MGM 20,000 Seat Arena Under Construction

$100 Million Shops at Tropicana Planned

Luxury 300,000 Retail Frontage at Excalibur Planned

Mandalay Bay Convention Expands to 2.1 Million SF

Monte Carlo Frontage and Theatre Under Construction

MGM Opened The Lot and City of Rock May 2015 drawing 300,000 people in four days

$4.5 Billion 3,000 Room Resorts World Under Construction

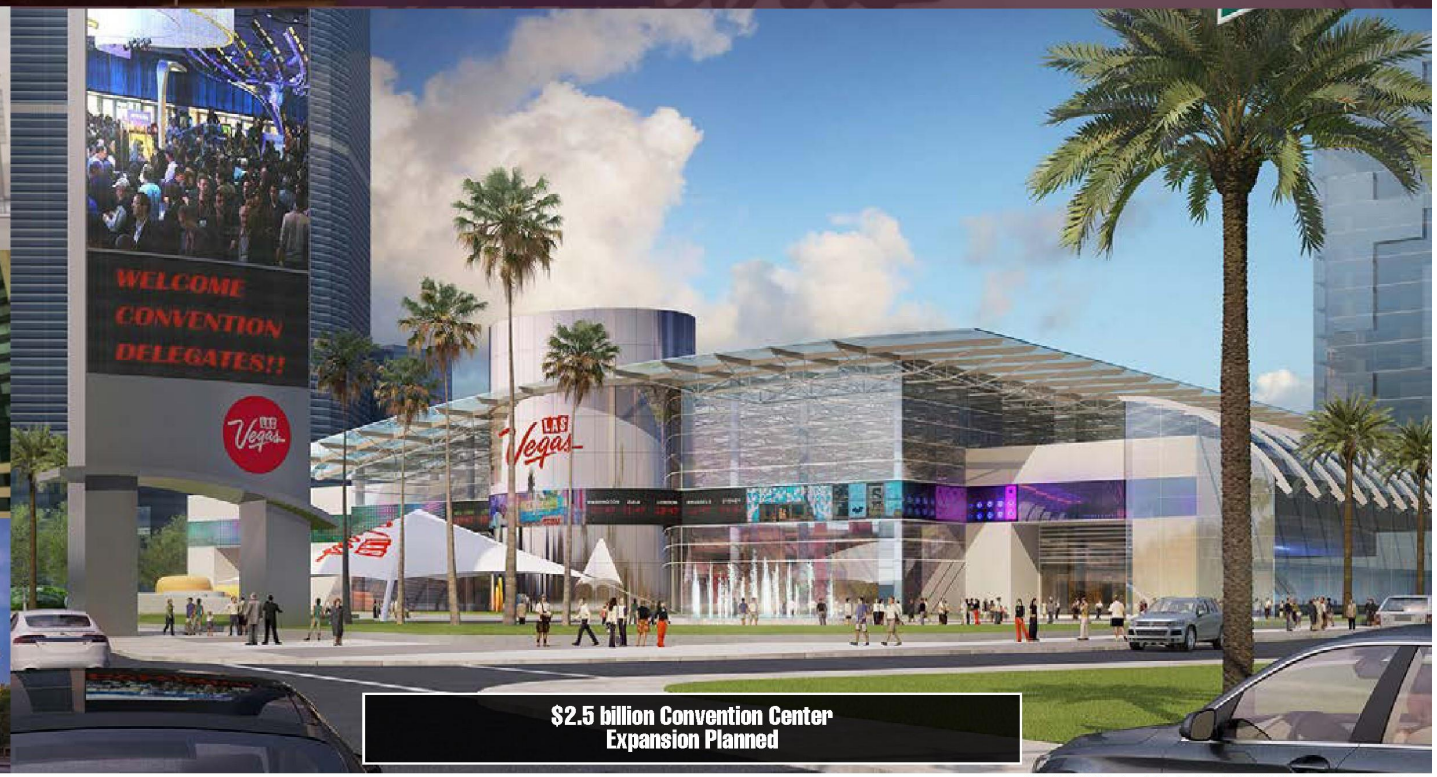
$6 Billion In New Development

- Group's multi-billion dollar Asian-themed resort on the Strip (expected to open in 2018) and Alon Crown 1,100 room Alon breaking ground in 2016.
- MGM & AEG's 20,000-seat arena under construction between New York-New York and Monte Carlo will draw hundreds of thousands of new visitors per year.
- Major renovations are underway or complete at The Venetian, Mandalay Bay, MGM Grand, The Mirage, Bellagio, the New Tropicana Las Vegas, SLS Hotel and Four Seasons Hotel.

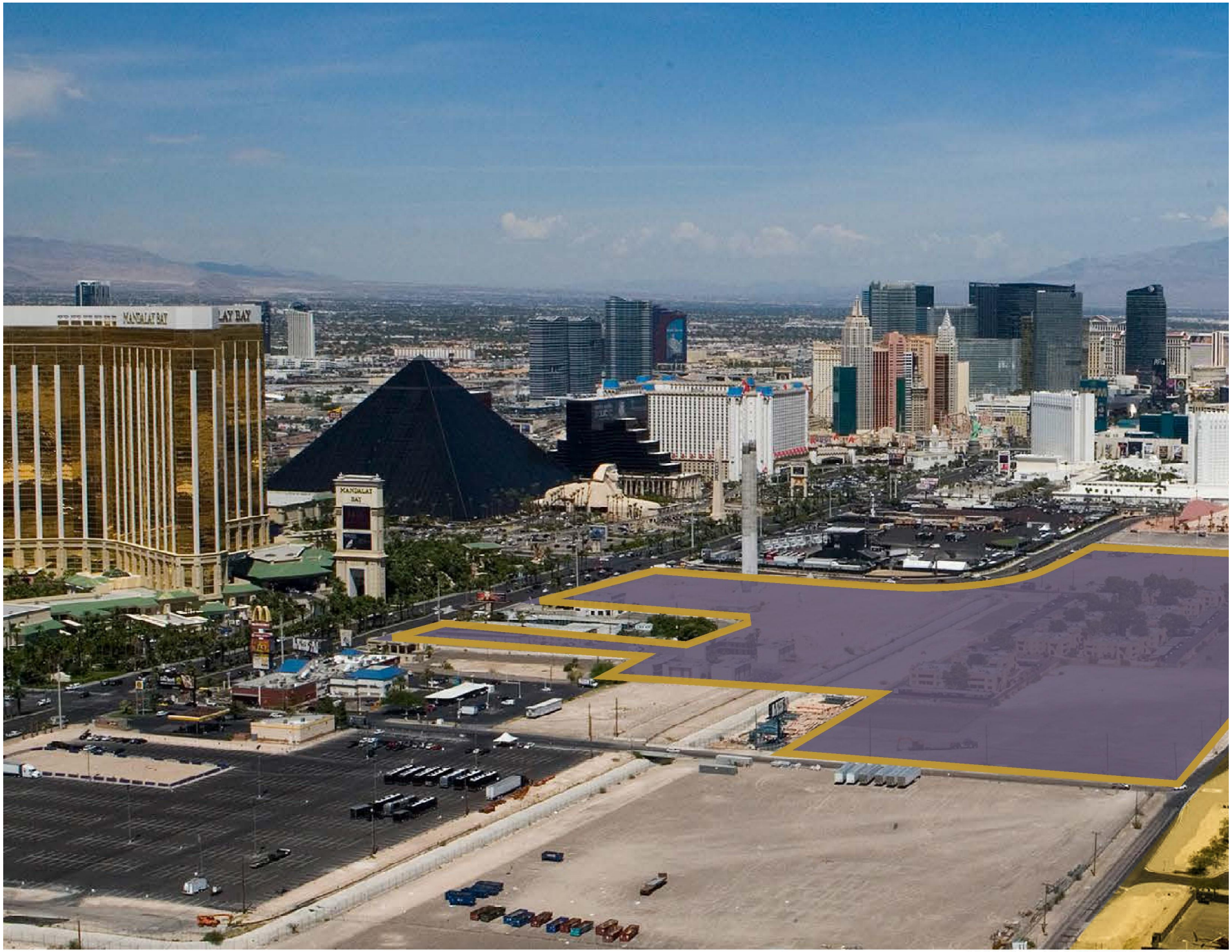
$2 billion Alon Crown Resorts Planned

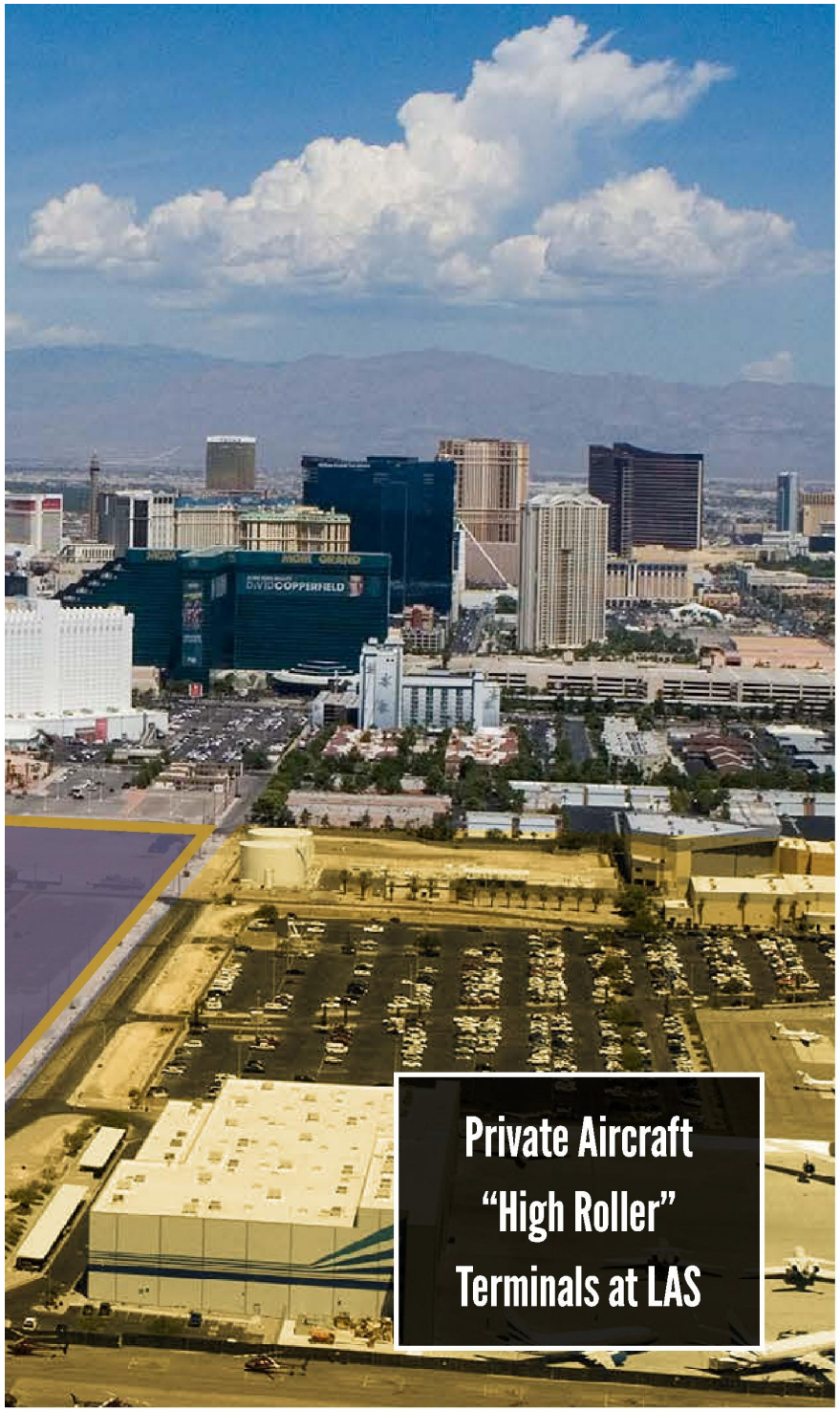
Silverton Timeshares Under Construction

Wyndam Blue Timeshares Opened July 2015



$2.5 billion Convention Center Expansion Planned


MANDALAY BAY
MANDALAY BAY



Offering Procedures

Cushman & Wakefield, Inc. ("C&W") is contacting prospective purchasers in order to solicit their interest in the acquisition of The Site on Las Vegas Strip. The Property is being offered on a strict "as-is" basis with the selection of the buyer being influenced by the level of physical and economic due diligence initially undertaken by prospective purchasers. In this regard, detailed financial information, title reports, service contracts and other relevant documentation are available for review.

Property Tours

Prospective purchasers are asked to contact C&W to arrange specific times for property tours.

Offer Submission

Prospective purchasers are kindly requested to submit offers to Cushman & Wakefield at their earliest convenience but no later than XX, XX, XXXX at the address specified below:

Marc D. Renard
Vice Chairman
213-955-6413
marc.renard@cushwake.com

Cushman & Wakefield of California, Inc.
601 South Figueroa Street, Suite 4700
Los Angeles, California 90017
Facsimile: (213) 627-5995

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018757

MANDALAY BAY
750' OF DIRECT FRONTAGE

The Site

The Site is comprised of 12 parcels totaling approximately 38.475 net acres located at the southeast corner of Las Vegas Boulevard South and East Mandalay Bay Road on the world famous Las Vegas Strip.

Current improvements on the Site include the Desert Oasis Motel, The Oasis Apartments, a two-story office building at 3951 Las Vegas Boulevard South and a one-story commercial building at 3953 Las Vegas Boulevard South. The former Skyvue development planned for the northwest portion of the Property received FAA height approvals and was planned for the world's tallest ferris wheel approximately 467-feet tall and a two-story retail / convention complex. Two concrete support columns for the wheel, approximately 240-feet tall, and four concrete foundations were built before construction was halted in August 2012.

The adjacent properties to the east fronting Haven Street are the signature private jet terminals of McCarran International Airport and the private jet terminal of the Las Vegas Sands Corp; to the west of the Site are Mandalay Bay Resort Casino and Convention Center, the Four Seasons Resort and Luxor Resort Casino; to the north of the Site are MGM's music festival property "The Lot" and the Tropicana Resort Casino; and to the south is undeveloped land primarily owned by the multinational conglomerate Triple 5 Group that is restricted by lower height limitations of approximately 284 feet.

Site highlights include:

- Income in-place of approximately $500,000 from existing tenants provides revenue while planning concept and designs are approved
- Unique opportunity to create branding synergies with private ingress/egress points to the adjacent high roller jet terminals
- Preferred south Strip location adjacent to four of the largest resorts in North America (MGM Grand, Mandalay Bay, Excalibur and Luxor).
- Established and high traffic location on the Las Vegas Strip
- Numerous world-class resorts, convention centers, luxury shopping, dining and entertainment attractions within walking distance.
- Proximate to the I-15 and I-215 Freeways

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NO.	ASSESSOR PARCEL	ADDRESS	PROPERTY USE	2014 NOI	YEAR BUILT	ACREAGE
1	162-28-202-013	95 East Ali Baba Lane	Former Casey Arms Apartments site/Undeveloped	-	-	8.965
2	162-28-301-001	47 East Mandalay Bay Road	Former Happi Inn site/ Skyvue construction	-	-	0.769
3	162-28-301-002	47 East Mandalay Bay Road	Former Happi Inn site/ Skyvue construction	-	-	0.45
4	162-28-301-010	3953 Las Vegas Boulevard South	(1-story commercial): Psychic Sessions	$18,000	1960	0.233
5	162-28-301-029	N/A	Graded/Undeveloped	-	-	5.822
6	162-28-301-032	3951 Las Vegas Boulevard South	(2-story): offices - Skyvue construction	-	1998	3.348
7	162-28-301-033	N/A	Graded/Concrete channel	-	-	3.767
8	162-28-301-034	3965 Las Vegas Boulevard South	(2-story): Desert Oasis Motel & Apts- 48 rooms	($13,624)	1963	3.026
9	162-28-301-036	3941 Las Vegas Boulevard South	Former Olympus Inn site/ Skyvue construction	-	-	1.76
10	162-28-301-037	N/A	Skyvue construction	-	-	1.82
11	162-28-302-001	N/A	Graded/Undeveloped	-	-	2.229
12	162-28-310-001	5316 Danville Lane, 5333 Bethel Lane	The Oasis Apartments - 128 units	$268,675	1984	6.286
			TOTAL	**$273,051**		**38.475**

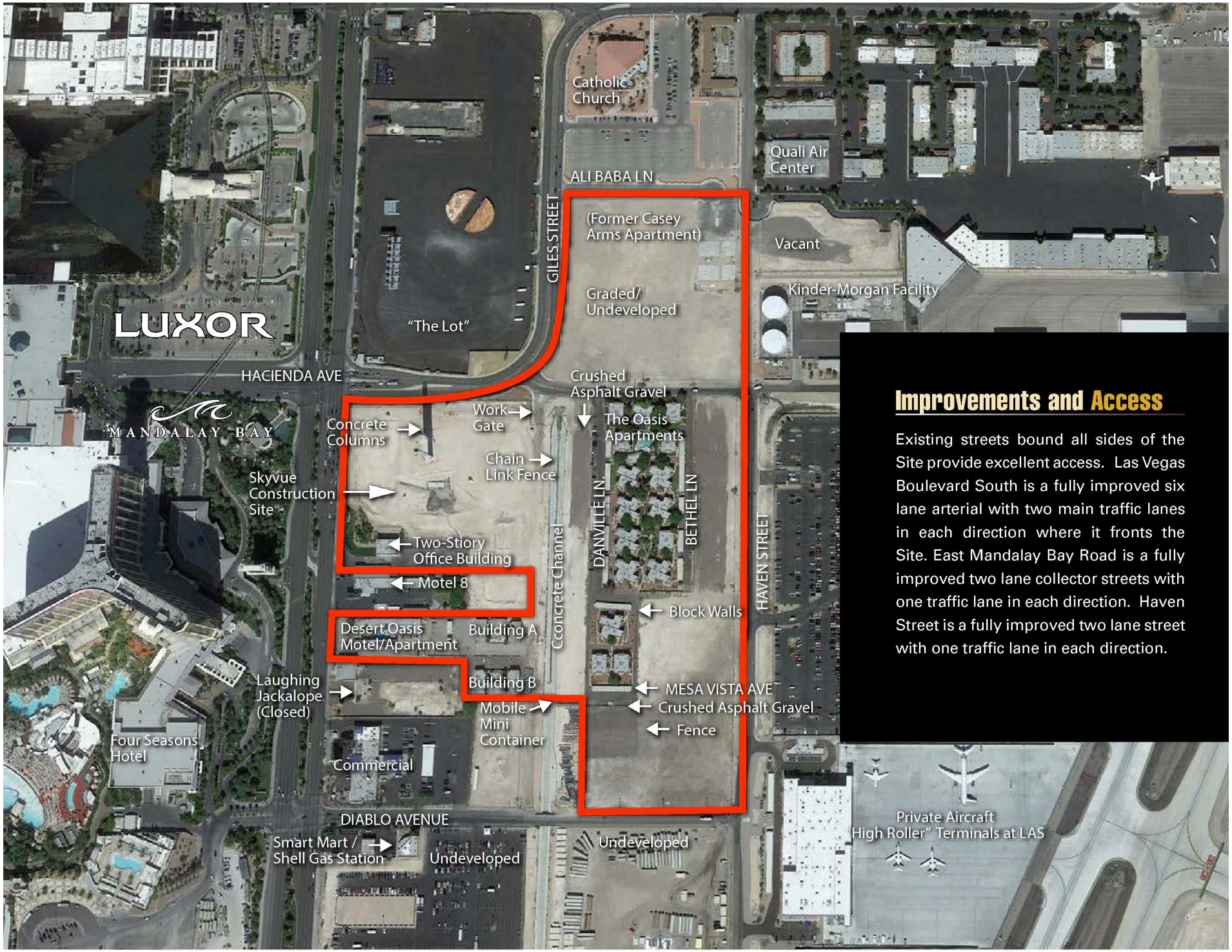
UTILITIES

The Site has full utility services provided by the following:

- Electricity: NV Energy
- Natural Gas: Southwest Gas Company
- Water: Las Vegas Valley Water District
- Sewer: Clark County Water Reclamation District
- Waste: Republic Services

EXISTING INCOME

The existing improvements on the Site, inclusive of the Desert Oasis Motel, Oasis Apartments and the strip retail building at 3953 Las Vegas Boulevard generate approximately $275,000 in annual net income.



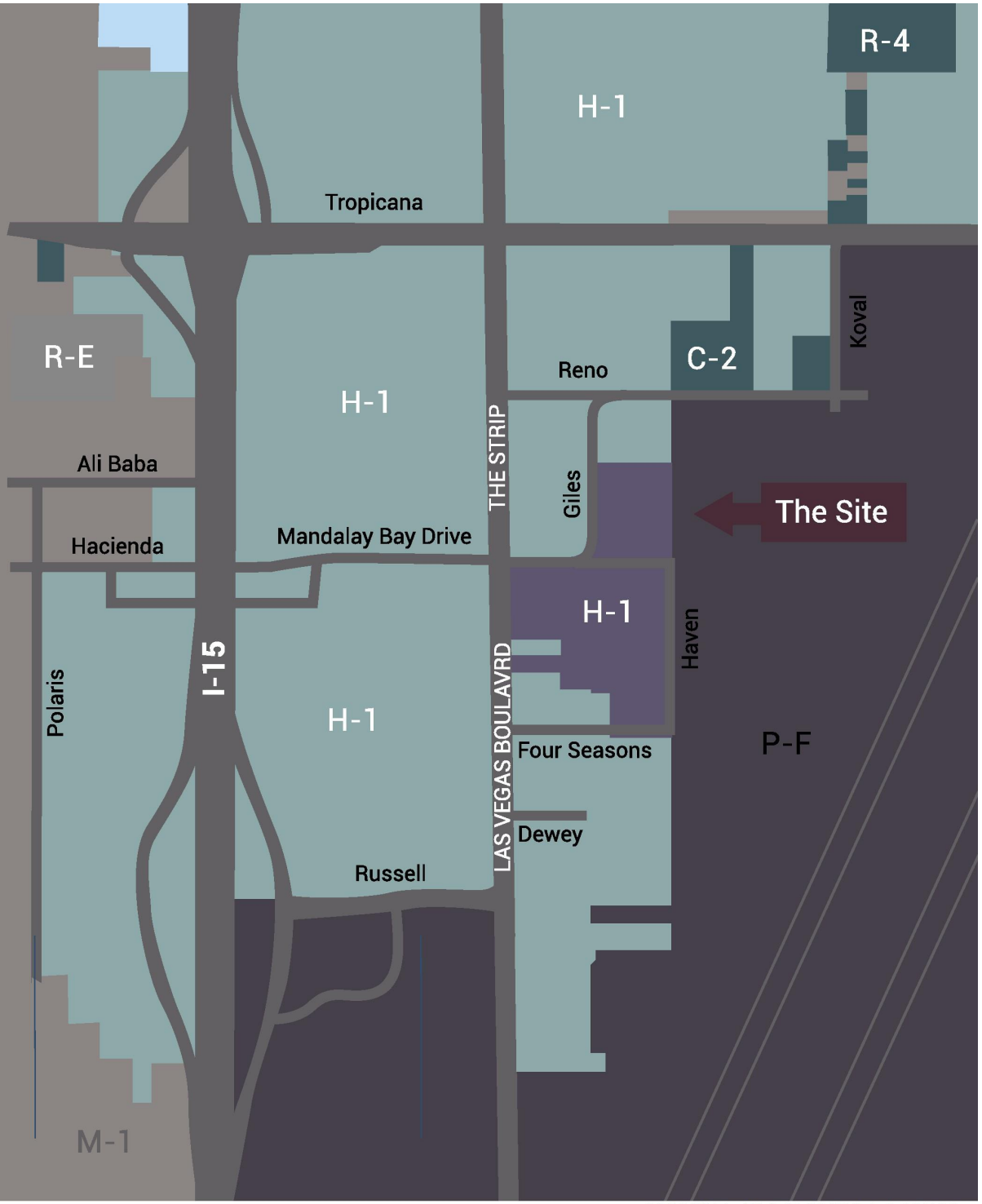
Improvements and Access

Existing streets bound all sides of the Site provide excellent access. Las Vegas Boulevard South is a fully improved six lane arterial with two main traffic lanes in each direction where it fronts the Site. East Mandalay Bay Road is a fully improved two lane collector streets with one traffic lane in each direction. Haven Street is a fully improved two lane street with one traffic lane in each direction.

Zoning

The Site is zoned H-1. This zoning provides for full service casino resorts and is the Strips primary gaming enterprise designation. Permitted uses include casino hotels, resort hotels, inns and motels, apartment rentals and condominiums, timeshares, public and institutional buildings, bars, restaurants, retail shops, and similar uses.

The Site is located within a Mixed-Use Overlay District. The Clark County Board of Commissioners approved an ordinance to the Clark County Code, Title 30 as Chapter 30.48 that established four different designations for Mixed-Use. The Board also established a number of Mixed Use Overlay Districts, with the majority being along or in close proximity to The Las Vegas Strip. The Site is within the designation of MUD-1, the most intense density zoning primarily located along the Las Vegas Strip resort corridor. The establishment of the Mixed Overlay District and the granting of the land use of MUD-1 make it easier for properties to receive approvals for mixed-use, high rise projects.

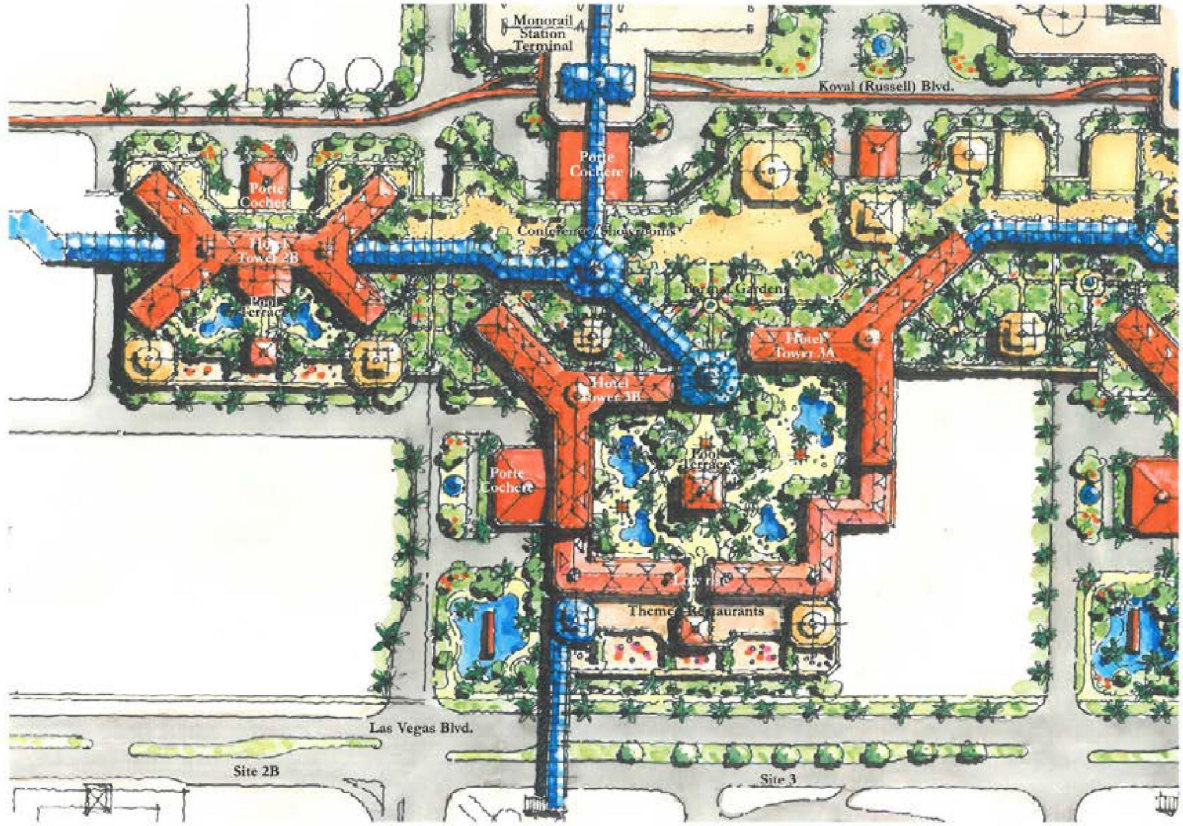


FAA Approved Height Allowance Up To 505 Feet On The Site

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has provided determination letters for the Site approving a height allowance of 505 feet fronting Las Vegas Boulevard and decreasing to 354 feet on the eastern portion of the Site. It should be noted that in March 2011 the Clark County has a Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the development of the 500 foot observation wheel and retail/convention space on 10.0 net acres of the Site.

Renderings and Plans

Current ownership has drafted conceptual plans that include the development of 9,360 hotel rooms with approximately 350,000 square feet of retail, conference and casino gaming space.



Conference/Showroom Level Summary

Site 3

Level	+40
Conference/Showrooms	200,000
Retail/Entertainment	50,000
Total	250,000

Site 2B

Level	+40
Conference/Showrooms	80,000
Retail/Entertainment	20,000
Total	100,000

Hotel Level Summary

Tower

Tower 2B	80rooms/floor x 30	= 2,400
Tower 3A	80rooms/floor x 36	= 2,880
Tower 3B	80rooms/floor x 36	= 2,880
Low Rise	80rooms/floor x 5	= 300
Subtotal		8,460

Limit restrictions

Maximum rooms per height limit

Tower 2B	100 x 36	= 3,600
Tower 3A	80 x 36	= 2,880
Tower 3B	80 x 36	= 2,880
Subtotal		9,360

0 200

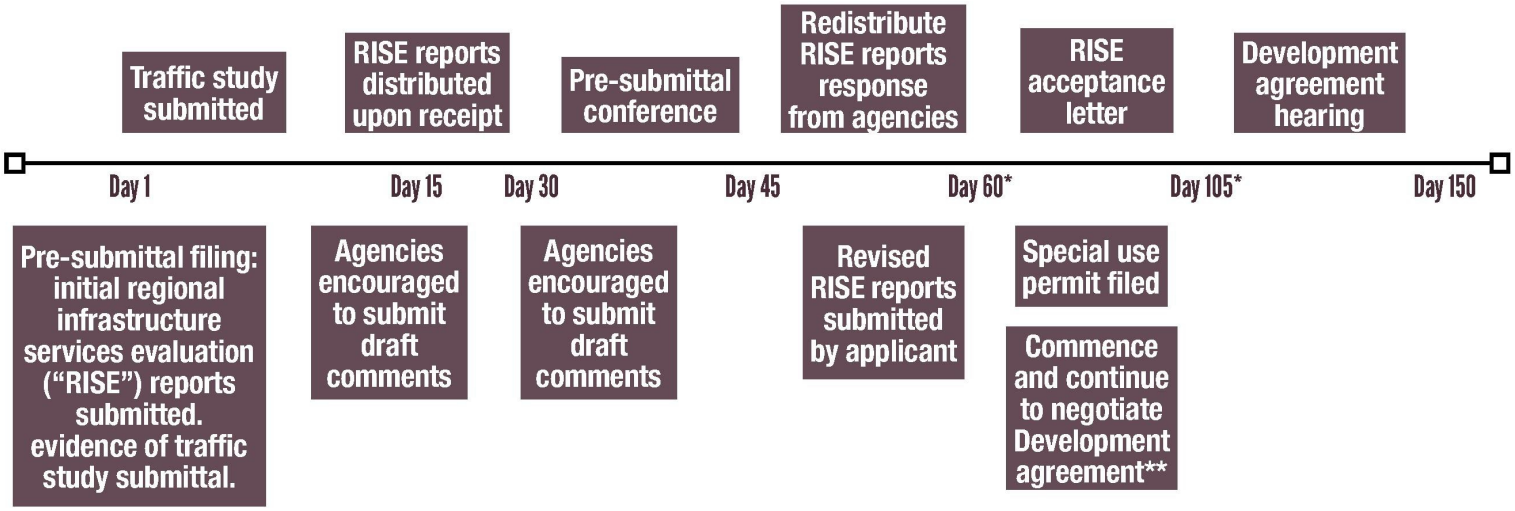
WORLD PORT RESORTS NEW WORLD LLC

Elevation +40 - 420
SITE 2-3 • HOTEL LEVEL

HART | HOWERTON
Planning • Architecture • Landscape Architecture • Interior Design • New York • San Francisco
7 • 13 • 2001

6 to 9 Month Permitting Process to Break Ground

The following is an outline of the estimated 6 to 9 month permitting process an investor will follow to enter into a development agreement within Clark County. Prior to starting the development agreement process with the County, the developer would acquire permit approvals from the Paradise Town Advisory Board.



*Acceptance letter may be issued within 30 days of presubmittal conference depending upon applicant's response.
**Development Agreement may be submitted in conjunction with Special Use Permit if negotiations are complete.
Fixed timeline may be flexible dependent upon applicant's response time.

Available Third Party Reports and Documentation

The following summarizes available third party reports that are posted within the online due diligence site:

- ALTA Survey Wallace Morris Surveying, dated May 2013
- Title Report by First American, dated July 2015
- Tax bills 2014 – 2015
- Phase I by Western Technologies Inc., dated April 2014
- Phase II by Western Technologies Inc., dated August 2003
- Limited Phase II by Western Technologies Inc., dated August 2004
- Geotechnical Evaluation by Western Technologies Inc., dated October 2003
- Geotechnical Evaluation by Western Technologies Inc., dated August 2004
- Geotechnical Evaluation by Western Technologies Inc., dated July 2011
- Geotechnical Recommendation Letters of by Western Technologies Inc., dated February 2012, April 2014
- Zoning Declaration Letter by Clark County Planning Department, dated October 2008
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Height Determination Letters, dated May 2011, June 2012, February 2015

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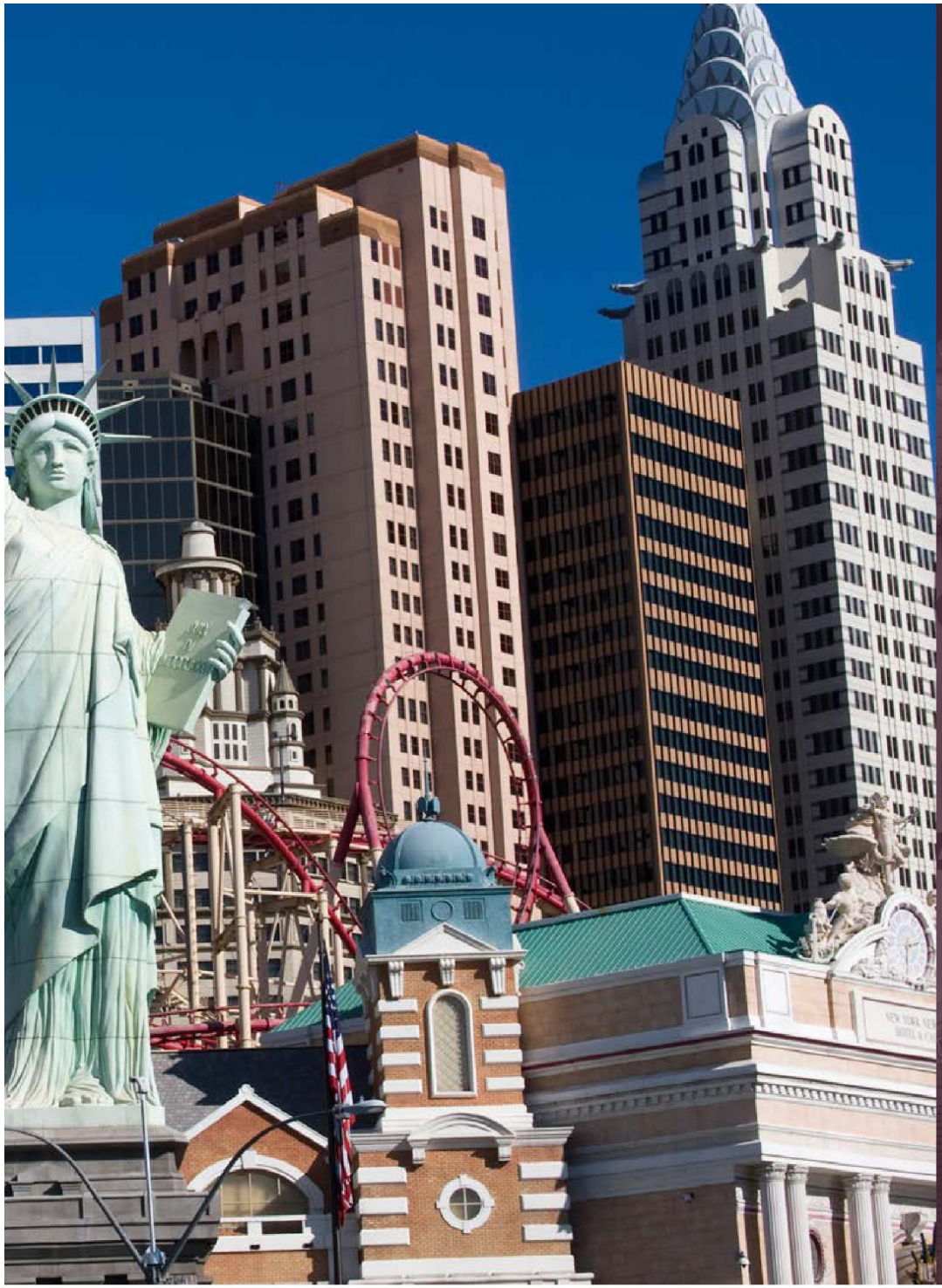

Area Overview

The Las Vegas Experience

Developed as an entertainment destination, Las Vegas is driven by a consumer services economy where "the experience" is its primary commodity. Las Vegas is one of the most visited tourist destinations in the United States and it possesses a unique international appeal that draws a remarkable 3.4 million visitors each month. Identified as the global capital of entertainment and gaming, it is the iconic three-mile stretch of Las Vegas Boulevard known as "the Strip" that draws visitors to Las Vegas. With 115,000 hotel rooms located on the Strip, the concentration of tourists is more than any other metropolitan statistical area in the world. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Association reported 41.1 million visitors in 2014 and project the total number of visitors to reach a new market high of 42 million in 2015.

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018767

Unparalleled Hotel and Resort Inventory

Las Vegas has a larger supply of hotel rooms than any other metropolitan statistical area in the world and in return drives extraordinary spending demographics. The vast majority of Las Vegas' lodging supply is located on the Strip, and approximately 76% of all visitors (31 million) to Las Vegas stay in hotels on the Strip each year. Luxurious mega-resorts as well as more moderately priced accommodations are concentrated on the Strip and in the immediate surrounding area to meet the needs of all segments of the visitor market. A comparable resort district cannot be found anywhere else.

As summarized in the exhibit below, 17 of the 30 largest resorts in the world are located on the Las Vegas Strip:

THE WORLD'S 30 LARGEST HOTELS AND RESORTS

RANK	RESORT	LOCATION	ROOMS	RANK	RESORT	LOCATION	ROOMS
1	MGM Grand	Las Vegas	6,852	16	Flamingo	Las Vegas	3,565
2	First World Hotel	Genting Highlands	6,118	17	Atlantis	Paradise Island	3,414
3	Disney's All-Star Hotel	Orlando	5,524	18	Hilton Hawaiian Village	Honolulu	3,386
4	Izmailovo	Moscow	5,000	19	Disney's Port Orleans French Quarter	Lake Buena Vista	3,056
5	Mandalay Bay	Las Vegas	4,752	20	Mirage	Las Vegas	3,044
6	Luxor	Las Vegas	4,408	21	Monte Carlo	Las Vegas	3,002
7	Ambassador City Jotiem	Pattaya	4,219	22	Venetian Macau	Macau	3,000
8	The Venetian	Las Vegas	4,049	23	Cosmopolitan	Las Vegas	2,998
9	Excalibur	Las Vegas	4,008	24	Westgate Las Vegas Resort and Casino	Las Vegas	2,956
10	Aria Resort & Casino	Las Vegas	4,004	25	Paris	Las Vegas	2,916
11	Caesars Palace	Las Vegas	3,960	26	Treasure Island	Las Vegas	2,884
12	Bellagio	Las Vegas	3,950	27	Gaylord Opryland Resort	Nashville	2,881
13	Sheraton	Macau	3,896	28	Disney's Pop Resort	Lake Buena Vista	2,880
14	Circus Circus	Las Vegas	3,774	29	Bally's	Las Vegas	2,814
15	Shinagawa Prince Hotel	Tokyo	3,680	30	Borgata	Atlantic City	2,802

Located in Las Vegas

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018768

Convention Centers and Trade Shows

Las Vegas is the world's most preferred convention and trade show city, offering more convention and meeting space than any other city in the world, with more than 11 million square feet of existing inventory, including more than 2.0 million square feet that have been completed during the past three years and an additional 4 million square feet of convention space is currently in development. The total annual non-gaming economic impact of conventions hosted by all Las Vegas facilities totals approximately $8.0 billion. Notable conventions scheduled in Las Vegas during 2015 and 2016 include the following:

CONVENTIONS & TRADE SHOWS (2015-2016)

DATE	EVENT	ATTENDEES
January-16	International CES 2016	163,000
November-15	Automotive Aftermarket Industry Week (AAIW) 2015	140,000
January-16	Las Vegas Market - Winter 2016	50,000
August-16	Las Vegas Market - Summer 2016	50,000
February-16	World of Concrete 2016	48,000
September-15	2015 Pack Expo Las Vegas	45,000
September-15	Super Mobility Week	40,000
March-16	Nightclub and Bar Show 2016	39,000
May-16	RECon 2016	36,000
June-16	International Communications Industries Association/ Infocomm 2016	35,000
May-16	National Hardware Show 2016	30,000
April-16	National Automobile Dealers Association 2016	30,000
March-16	Healthcare Information & Management Systems Society (HIMSS16)	30,000
October-15	National Association of Convenience Stores, Inc. (NACS) Exposition 2015	30,000
September-15	2015 Mr. Olympia	30,000
June-16	International Esthetics Cosmetics & Spa Conference (IECSC) 2016	25,000
November-15	American Academy of Opthalmology Annual Meeting 2015	25,000
November-15	National Business Aviation Association, Inc. (NBAA) - 2015	25,000
September-15	Interbike Expo 2015	25,000
January-16	Kitchen and Bath Industry Show 2016	24,000
July-16	Deafnation World Expo 2016	23,000
February-16	Safari Club International 44th Annual Hunters Convention	21,000
December-15	Power-Gen International Conference 2015	20,000
October-15	G2E: Global Gaming Expo 2015	17,000
October-15	ISSA / INTERCLEAN North America 2015	16,000
March-16	Western Veterinary Conference 2016	14,500
October-15	ABC Kids Expo 2015	14,000
October-15	Live Design International 2015	14,000
September-15	International Vision Expo West 2015	14,000
June-16	Waste Expo 2016	12,000
March-16	National Association of Pizzeria Operators Expo - 2016	12,000
March-16	International Wireless Communications Expo 2016	12,000

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018769

Strong Increase in Visitor Economics

The following chart presents a history of visitor volumes and total visitor revenue for Las Vegas:

LAS VEGAS TOURISM IMPACT

YEAR	TOTAL VISITORS	% CHANGE	TOTAL VISITOR REVENUE	% CHANGE	REVENUE PER VISITOR	% CHANGE
1988	17,199,808	---	10,039,448,000	---	584	---
1989	18,129,684	5.4	11,912,941,000	18.7	657	12.6
1990	20,954,420	15.6	14,320,746,000	20.2	683	4.0
1991	21,315,116	1.7	14,326,554,000	0.0	672	(1.7)
1992	21,886,865	2.7	14,686,644,000	2.5	671	(0.2)
1993	23,522,593	7.5	15,127,167,000	3.0	643	(4.2)
1994	28,214,362	19.9	19,163,212,000	26.7	679	5.6
1995	29,002,122	2.8	20,686,800,000	8.0	713	5.0
1996	29,636,361	2.2	22,533,258,000	8.9	760	6.6
1997	30,464,635	2.8	24,952,189,000	10.7	819	7.7
1998	30,605,128	0.5	24,577,469,000	(1.5)	803	(2.0)
1999	33,809,134	10.5	28,695,178,000	16.8	849	5.7
2000	35,849,691	6.0	31,462,337,000	9.6	878	3.4
2001	35,017,317	(2.3)	31,907,492,000	1.4	911	3.8
2002	35,071,504	0.2	31,613,938,000	(0.9)	901	(1.1)
2003	35,540,126	1.3	32,777,906,000	3.7	922	2.3
2004	37,388,781	5.2	33,724,467,000	2.9	902	(2.2)
2005	38,566,717	3.2	36,733,453,000	8.9	952	5.6
2006	38,914,889	0.9	39,406,265,000	7.3	1,013	6.3
2007	39,196,761	0.7	41,578,079,000	5.5	1,061	4.8
2008	37,481,552	(4.4)	42,900,000,000	3.2	1,145	7.9
2009	36,351,469	(3.0)	35,200,000,000	(17.9)	968	(15.4)
2010	37,335,436	2.7	36,800,000,000	4.5	986	1.8
2011	38,928,708	4.3	40,200,000,000	9.2	1,033	4.8
2012	39,727,022	2.1	44,900,000,000	11.7	1,130	9.4
2013	39,668,221	(0.1)	45,200,000,000	0.7	1,139	0.8
2014	41,126,512	3.7	45,200,000,000	0.0	1,099	(3.5)
AVERAGE ANNUAL % CHANGE		**3.4**		**6.0**		**2.5**

Source: LVCVA

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018770

Strong Increase in Convention Attendance

With 11 million square feet of existing and planned convention space, Las Vegas is one of the world's most convention destinations. The Las Vegas Convention Center is the primary Las Vegas convention venue, a state-of-the-art facility, which features 3.2 million square-feet of exhibit and meeting space, and will soon expand to 5.8 million square feet. The following demonstrates the strong increase of convention attendance during the previous five years:

CONVENTION VISITATION

YEAR	TOTAL VISITORS	% CHANGE
1983	943,611	---
1984	1,050,916	11.4
1985	1,072,629	2.1
1986	1,519,421	41.7
1987	1,677,716	10.4
1988	1,702,158	1.5
1989	1,508,842	(11.4)
1990	1,742,194	15.5
1991	1,794,444	3.0
1992	1,969,435	9.8
1993	2,439,734	23.9
1994	2,684,171	10.0
1995	2,924,879	9.0
1996	3,305,507	13.0
1997	3,519,424	6.5
1998	3,301,705	(6.2)
1999	3,772,726	14.3
2000	3,853,363	2.1
2001	5,014,240	30.1
2002	5,105,450	1.8
2003	5,657,796	10.8
2004	5,724,864	1.2
2005	6,166,194	7.7
2006	6,307,961	2.3
2007	6,209,253	(1.6)
2008	5,899,725	(5.0)
2009	4,492,275	(23.9)
2010	4,473,134	(0.4)
2011	4,865,272	8.8
2012	4,944,014	1.6
2013	5,107,416	3.3
2014	5,169,054	1.2
Annual Compound % Change		5.6

Source: LVCVA

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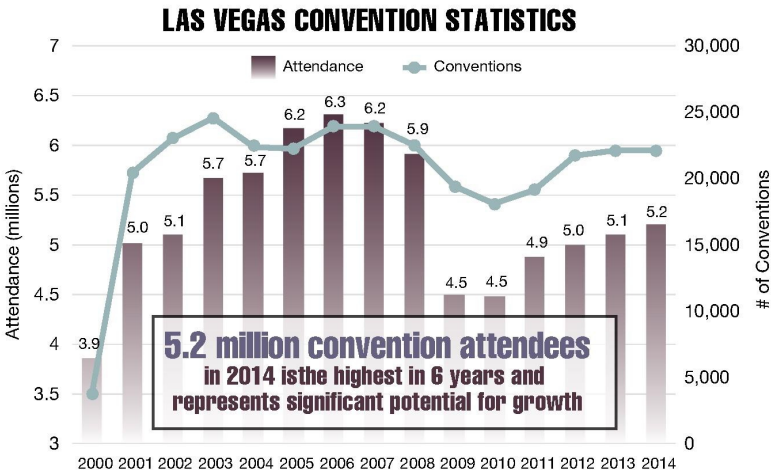
4 Million Square Feet of Convention Space in Development

Indicative of the strong growth in convention demand, in February 2015 the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) acquired the former Riviera hotel located on 23-acres for $182.5 million. A planned $40 million demolition during 2015-2016 of the former hotel will lay the foundation for a $2.5 billion expansion of the Las Vegas Convention Center, increasing convention capacity to 5.8 million square feet. The expansion will transform the current convention center, rebranded as the Las Vegas Global Business District, and support the demand growth projected to be an additional 500,000 visitors per year.

Phase One is currently underway and includes developing 750,000 square-feet of new exhibit space and 187,500 square-feet of supporting meeting space, renovating and upgrading the existing facility, incorporating touch screens, faster Internet speeds, new restaurants and an updated façade. Phase II includes the expansion onto the former Riviera site from a current total footprint of 3.2 million square-feet to 5.7 million square-feet of space, with new street infrastructure and new centralized transportation hub for the entire city. Additionally, the expansion project will include development of a new office park in the neighborhood surrounding the center.

In addition to the LVCVA space, 350,000 square feet of convention space at Mandalay Bay and 1,000,000 square feet of convention space at Genting Group's Resorts World are under construction.

The $2.5 billion convention center expansion will generate an increase in demand of 500,000 visitors per year



Development on the Strip

With approximately $21 billion in high-profile developments completed since 2008, the Strip has attracted significant investment capital from both ownership entities that already possess a significant stake in the future success of the Strip and new capital sources seeking to benefit from Las Vegas' exceptional long-term fundamentals. Resort and casino ownership is largely consolidated among operators that are devoted to continuing to increase visitation levels by upgrading the Las Vegas experience.

RECENT LAS VEGAS STRIP DEVELOPMENTS – 2013 TO 2018

PROPERTY	COST ($ MILLIONS)	CONVENTION SPACE (SF)	ROOMS TIMESHARE	ROOMS HOTEL	COMPLETED
2013					
Caesars Palace - Nobu Hotel (former Centurion)	$30			180	February 2013
The LINQ (Phase 1)	$550				Fall 2013
TOTAL 2013	$580	0		180	
2014					
The Grandview at Las Vegas	$55			400	February 2014
The LINQ (Phase 2)	$230			849	February 2014
The Cromwell (Rebrand / Remodel)	$185				May 2014
New York New York / Monte Carlo (Open Air Plaza)	$50				June 2014
SLS Las Vegas (Rebrand / Remodel)	$415	80,000		1,613	August 2014
Delano (Reband / Remodel)	$80				September 2014
Red Rock Casino (Renovation)	$35				Fall 2014
Golden Nugget (Remodel)	$15				December 2014
TOTAL 2014	$1,065	80,000		2,862	
2015					
Wyndham Desert Blue	$172			281	March 2015
Bellagio (Renovation)	$55				April 2015
The Grand Bazaar Shops	$50				February 2015
Caesars Palace (Omnia Nightclub)	$38				March 2015
Treasure Island	$15				April 2015
Galleria at Sunset	$26				Spring 2015
Rock in Rio (MGM Resorts Festival Grounds)	$20				May 2015
TOTAL 2015	$376	0		281	

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FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

PROPERTY	COST ($ MILLIONS)	CONVENTION SPACE (SF)	ROOMS TIMESHARE	ROOMS HOTEL	COMPLETED
2016					
MGM Resorts International Areana (Indoor Arena)	$375				April 2016
Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino (Renovation)	$66				January 2016
Topgolf Las Vegas (Renovation)	$50				Spring 2016
Toshiba Plaza	$66				January 2016
Henderson Space and Science Center	$63				Spring 2016
Thomas & Mack Center (Renovation)	$47				Spring 2016
Tropicana Las Vegas (Renovation)	$20				Spring 2016
Boulevard Mall (Redevelopment)	$23				Fall 2016
TOTAL 2016	**$710**	**0**		**0**	
2018					
All Net Resort and Arena	$1,400				CY 2018
Resorts World Las Vegas (Phase 1)	$4,000				Spring 2018
TOTAL 2018	$5,400	0		0	
TOTAL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT	$6,110	0		0	

Significant Projects

Resorts World Las Vegas – In 2013, the Genting Group purchased the 87-acre, former Echelon site on the northern end of the Strip for $350 million. Branded Resorts World, the planned Chinese Village-themed, four-phased mega-resort broke ground June 2015 with opening planned in 2018. Construction of Phase I on the multi-phased project is planned for 3,000-rooms, 22-villas, 3,500-gaming machines, a 100,000-square-foot casino/gaming floor, 500,000-square-foot convention center, dozens of dining options, more than 15-retail stores, a center bar with live entertainment, a 50,000-square-foot, 58-foot tall exotic aquarium, and the highest observation deck and sky park in the city. Subsequent phases will add additional hotel rooms, gaming space, convention center space, a Great Wall of China replica, a live panda exhibit, an indoor water park, a bowling alley, a movie theater, and a 4,200-seat rotating theater.

Wyndham Desert Blue Time Share – The 19-story, 281-unit timeshare on Twain Avenue just west of Interstate 15 opened in July 2015.

The Park by MGM – The Park is currently under construction between and around New York-New York and Monte Carlo. The eight-acre site will feature natural desert landscaping, cobblestone walkways, and several unique water features. Man-made structures will proved shade during the day and will light up at night. The outdoor space will feature live entertainment, patio style seating throughout, ample shopping and indoor/outdoor dining options. This new venue between New York-New York and Monte Carlo will connect The Park with the new Arena, and both will open concurrently in the spring of 2016.

The Arena (MGM Resorts) – Construction broke ground in May 2014 on a 16-acre, $375-million entertainment district located between Monte Carlo and New York-New York. The MGM Resorts/AEG collaboration will consist of an indoor arena that will feature 20,000-seats, 50-luxury suites, more than two-dozen private loge boxes, club seating, and other specially designed exclusive hospitality offerings and dining pavilions. Expected to hold more than 100-events annually, The Arena will be hosting concerts, red-carpet award shows, professional sports events such as basketball or hockey, boxing, mixed martial arts, and other major functions. Construction is slated for completion in Spring 2016 and will open concurrently with The Park.

The Grand Bazaar Shops (Bally's) – The $50-million outdoor retail complex is located on the southeast corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Flamingo Road, in the front portion of the property. Inspired by great markets from around the world, the shops contains 110-stores, including Swatch, Superdry, Havaianas, and Campo Marzio. More than a third of the property will feature restaurants, bars and food outlets. The main feature of the bazaar shops is an eye-catching tower called the Swarovski Crystal Starburst. The tower is positioned over the brand's store and displays a midnight show of lights and music. The retail complex opened in January 2015.

City of Rock (MGM Resorts) – Opened in May 2015, City of Rock is located on the southwest corner of East Sahara Avenue and South Las Vegas Boulevard. The $30-million open air venue is home to one of the largest music festival venues in the world, Rock in Rio (RiR). The venue has a capacity of 85,000, and during RiR, it will feature six stages, a Ferris wheel, a zipline, shopping and themed food courts. The Rock in Rio festival will held biennially, and MGM plans to use the site for other mega festivals, athletic events and concerts when not in use for RiR.

All Net Resort Arena – is being built at a cost of approximately $1.4 billion and is set to open in early 2018 on the north end of the Las Vegas Strip. In addition to a spectacular 860,000-square-foot arena that is able to host big ticket events, the complex includes the Victory Plaza shopping and dining district and a 44-story hotel with 500 specialty suites. The arena at the All Net Resort features a unique retractable roof. The Victory Plaza area covers 300,000 square feet and is a pedestrian-only plaza that offers something akin to the Times Square experience in New York.

Mandalay Bay Convention Center (Phase 1 & 2) – A $66-million expansion on the Mandalay Bay Convention Center completed is scheduled to complete January 2016. Construction on Phase 1 completed July 2015 adding more than 350,000-square-feet of exhibit space, as well as underground parking. Phase 2 of the expansion will include 70,000-square-feet of additional ballroom space that will be divisible by five breakout areas for corporate groups. When completed, the convention center will total 2,050,000 square feet.

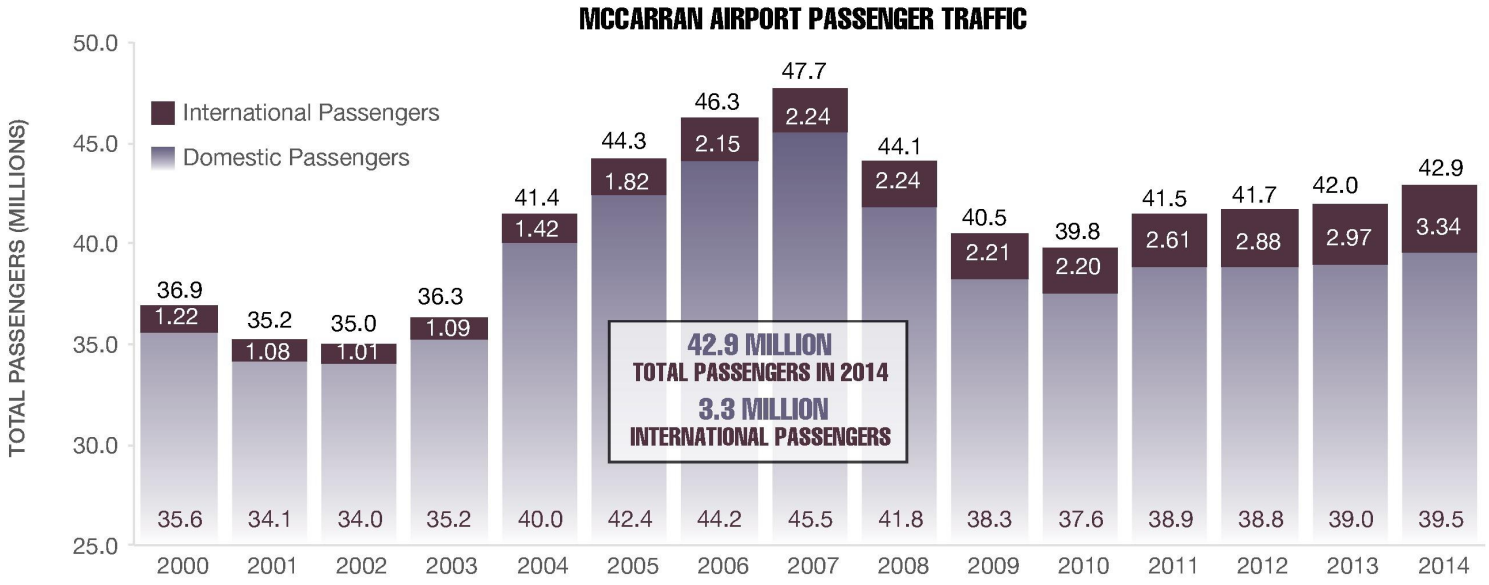
Shops at Tropicana – A new, $100-million, 275,000-square-foot, two-story, enclosed shopping mall will feature luxe retail, a food court on the ground floor with five new boutique restaurants and two Strip-facing restaurants. The project is expected to begin in fall 2015 with an anticipated completion date in the 2017.

The Site is Visible to Over 42 Million Visitors Per Year

MCCARRAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT EXPANSION

McCarran International Airport is one of the busiest airports in the country. McCarran serves both short and long haul markets, along with international markets. In 2014, Airports Council International ranked McCarran ninth in North America and 25th in the world for passenger traffic, with approximately 43 million arriving and departing passengers each year. 2014 observed an increase of over 1 million more passengers over 2013, or a 2.4% increase in traffic. With over 30 air carriers, McCarran provides nonstop service to domestic and international destinations including Canada, Germany, Mexico, the United Kingdom and South Korea. 2014 was the highest year on record for international tourism, with over 3.3 million visitors to the Strip.

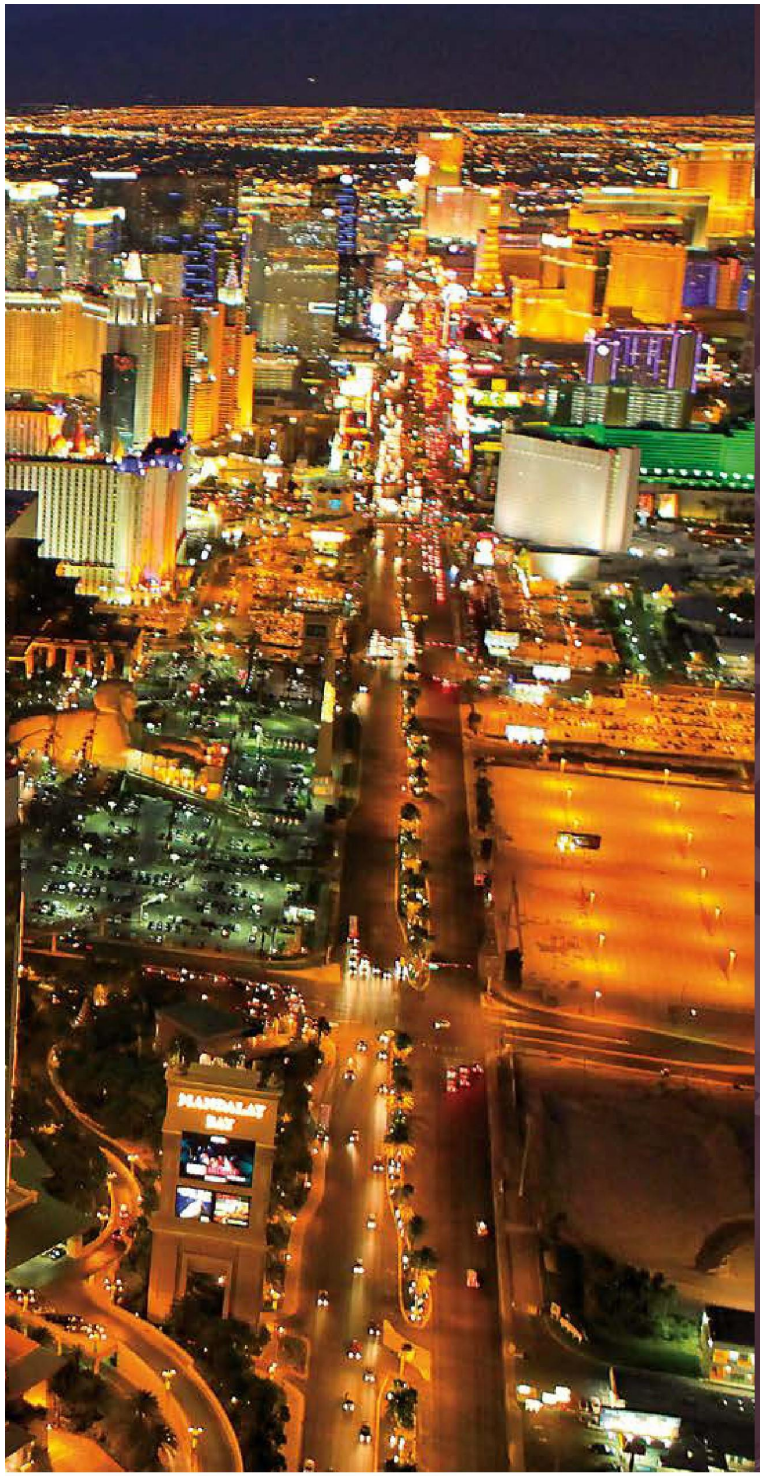
Major expansion and improvements totaling $3.5 billion include Terminal 3 that opened in 2012 and the new $100 million control tower was completed in early 2015. The 1.9 million-square-foot expansion of Terminal 3 increased the airport's annual capacity to approximately 55 million passengers.



Las Vegas Monorail

Plans for the expansion of the Monorail place the line and potential stops adjacent to the Site. The Las Vegas Monorail is a six-stop, elevated train system that travels along a 3.9-mile route connecting major hotels and attractions along the Strip. It enables passengers to travel the length of the resort corridor beginning at the MGM Grand with stops at Bally's/Paris, Flamingo/Caesars Palace, Harrah's/Imperial Palace, Las Vegas Convention Center, the hotel called LVH and ending at the intersection of Sahara Avenue and Las Vegas Boulevard. The train is capable of transporting 3,200 passengers per hour in each direction and has carried over 50 million passengers.

THE
MANDALAY BAY



Market Analysis

Overview

The Site is located within the Las Vegas Strip Gaming Enterprise Zoning District (the "GED"). The GED supports the expansion of gaming and entertainment activities and associated resort hotels. This zoning designation offers an extremely flexible development approval process offering a number of potential uses that can include, but are not limited to any combination of:

- Themed Resort and Hotel
- Casino and Gaming
- Condominiums
- Luxury/Upscale Retail
- Timeshares
- Dining and Entertainment

2014 LAS VEGAS STATISTICS	
Visitor Volume	41,126,512
Hotel Room Inventory	150,544
Strip ADR	$248.89
Strip Occupancy	90.2%
Strip RevPar	$224.49
Convention Attendance	5,169,054
Convention Meetings	22,103
Clark County Gaming Revenue	$9,554,002,000
Las Vegas Strip Gaming Revenue	$6,372,526,000

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Las Vegas Resort Hotel Market

The Las Vegas lodging market has historically attained occupancy levels well above the national average. The following table presents an analysis of the Las Vegas lodging market since 1985:

LAS VEGAS LODGING STATISTICS

YEAR	INVENTORY	% CHANGE	HOTEL OCCUPANCY	% CHANGE	MOTEL OCCUPANCY	% CHANGE	TOTAL OCCUPANCY	% CHANGE	TOTAL ROOMS OCCUPIED	% CHANGE
1985	53,067	---	84.7	---	70.1	---	79.8	---	15,456,825	---
1986	56,494	6.5	86.3	1.9	70.9	1.1	81.4	2.0	16,784,932	8.6
1987	58,474	3.5	87.0	0.8	74.0	4.4	83.4	2.5	17,800,070	6.0
1988	61,394	5.0	89.3	2.6	73.7	(0.4)	85.1	2.0	19,069,897	7.1
1989	67,391	9.8	89.9	0.7	72.5	(1.6)	85.2	0.1	20,957,253	9.9
1990	73,730	9.4	89.1	(0.9)	69.8	(3.7)	84.7	(0.6)	22,793,998	8.8
1991	76,879	4.3	85.2	(4.4)	62.6	(10.3)	80.3	(5.2)	22,532,851	(1.1)
1992	76,523	(0.5)	88.8	4.2	66.1	5.6	83.9	4.5	23,434,021	4.0
1993	86,053	12.5	92.6	4.3	69.7	5.4	87.6	4.4	27,514,586	17.4
1994	88,560	2.9	92.6	0.0	73.2	5.0	89.0	1.6	28,768,716	4.6
1995	90,046	1.7	91.4	(1.3)	72.4	(1.1)	88.0	(1.1)	28,922,775	0.5
1996	99,072	10.0	93.4	2.2	75.7	4.6	90.4	2.7	32,689,797	13.0
1997	105,347	6.3	90.3	(3.3)	68.8	(9.1)	86.4	(4.4)	33,222,230	1.6
1998	109,365	3.8	90.3	0.0	67.3	(2.2)	85.8	(0.7)	34,249,837	3.1
1999	120,294	10.0	92.1	2.0	68.6	1.9	88.0	2.6	38,638,433	12.8
2000	124,270	3.3	92.5	0.4	71.9	4.8	89.1	1.3	40,414,468	4.6
2001	126,610	1.9	88.9	(3.9)	63.8	(11.3)	84.7	(4.9)	39,142,115	(3.1)
2002	126,787	0.1	88.8	(0.1)	60.2	(5.6)	84.0	(0.8)	38,859,613	(0.7)
2003	130,482	2.9	89.6	0.9	60.5	0.5	85.0	1.2	39,760,735	2.3
2004	131,503	0.8	92.0	2.7	68.7	13.6	88.6	4.2	41,953,010	5.5
2005	133,186	1.3	91.8	(0.2)	72.0	4.8	89.2	0.7	43,362,698	3.4
2006	132,605	(0.4)	93.2	1.5	65.2	(9.4)	94.6	6.1	45,787,180	5.6
2007	132,947	0.3	94.0	0.9	64.5	(1.1)	90.4	(4.4)	43,867,192	(4.2)
2008	140,529	5.7	89.8	(4.5)	57.8	(10.4)	86.0	(4.9)	42,967,252	(2.1)
2009	148,941	6.0	85.3	(5.0)	50.1	(13.3)	81.5	(5.2)	41,986,134	(2.3)
2010	148,935	(0.0)	83.5	(2.1)	52.0	3.8	80.4	(1.3)	43,365,743	3.3
2011	150,161	0.8	86.9	4.1	56.0	7.7	83.8	4.2	45,654,165	5.3
2012	150,481	0.2	87.4	0.6	58.0	3.6	84.4	0.7	46,479,707	1.8
2013	150,593	0.1	87.1	(0.3)	59.8	3.1	84.3	(0.1)	46,191,449	(0.6)
2014	150,544	(0.0)	89.1	2.3	65.0	8.7	86.8	3.0	47,497,234	2.8
AVERAGE ANNUAL % CHANGE		**3.7**		**0.2**		**(0.3)**		**0.3**		**3.9**
YTD 5/14	149,347	---	90.2	---	66.8	---	87.9	---	19,909,507	---
YTD 5/15	149,352	0.0	89.1	(1.2)	67.0	0.3	87.0	(1.0)	19,758,379	(0.8)

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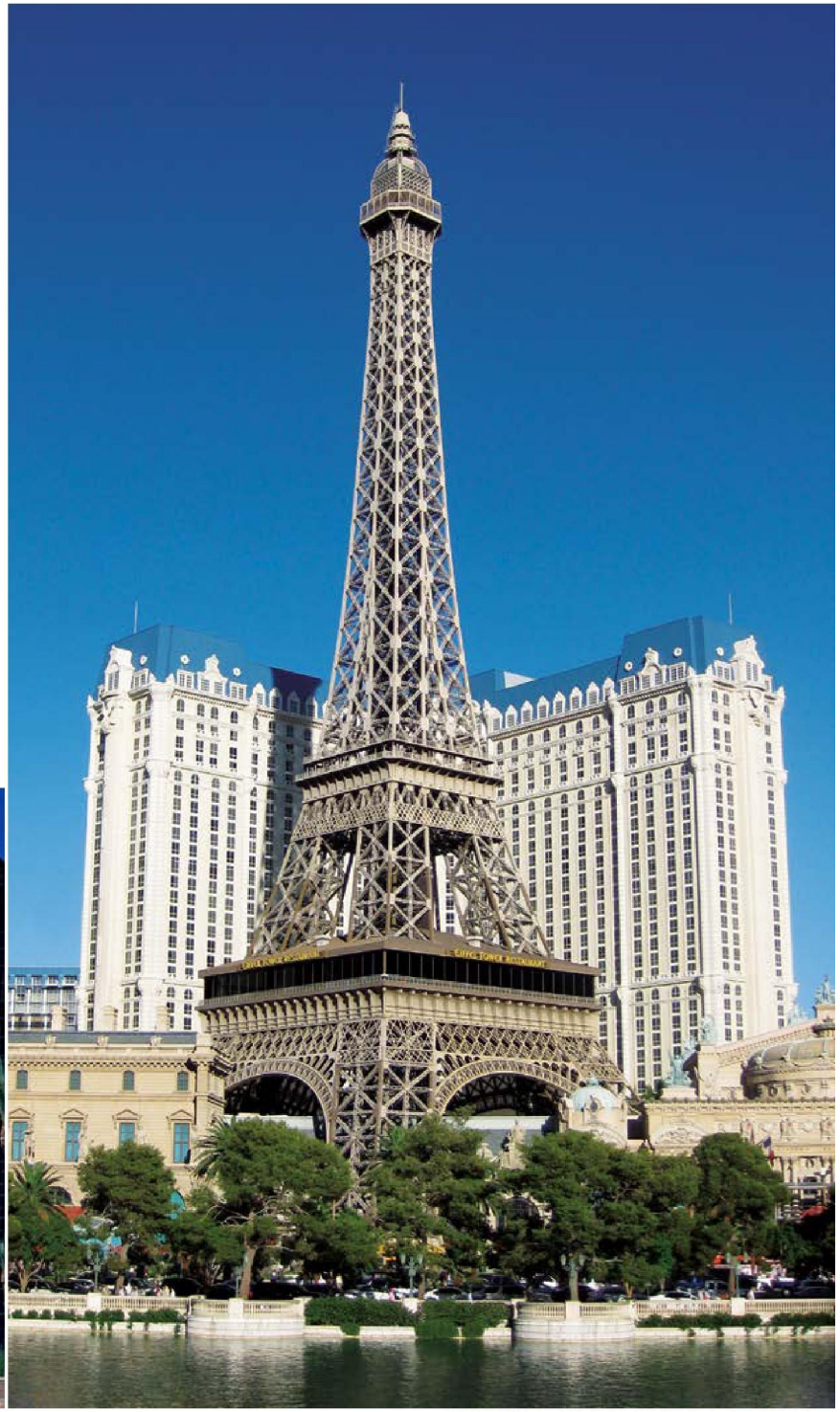
Luxury Resort Hotel Comparables

The following provides an overview of the anticipated competitive set for a future hotel resort development at the Site. The more recently opened properties are the Aria (as part of CityCenter) in 2009 and the Cosmopolitan in 2010 Venetian/Palazzo and Wynn/Encore opened in January and December of 2008, respectively. New 'boutique' entrants to the Strip opening in 2014 include The Cromwell Las Vegas, an upscale boutique property backed by Caesars Entertainment and SLS Las Vegas. It should be noted that all of the newer properties are geared toward the upper end of the market.

In May 2015, Genting Gaming announced the ground breaking of Resorts World Las Vegas. Following this in June 2015, Crown Resorts announced the purchase of the former Frontier site for the development of Alon. These two projects will add approximately 4,000 high-end rooms to the Strip market.



SELECT LUXURY RESORTS AND CASINOS

	ARIA RESORT & CASINO	BELLAGIO	THE COSMOPOLITAN	VENETIAN / PALLAZZO	WYNN / ENCORE
Hotel Summary					
Owner	MGM Resorts Intl.	MGM Resorts Intl.	Blackstone	Las Vegas Sands Corp.	Wynn Resorts Ltd.
Height	600	508	604	642	631
Acres	n/a	76.00	8.45	67.00	215.00
Total Guest Rooms	4,004	3,933	2,959	7,095	4,750
2014 Average Daily Rate	$217	$254	$307	$223	$274
2014 Occupancy	93%	93%	94%	88%	87%
2014 RevPar	$202	$236	$287	$196	$238
Casino/Gaming Summary					
Total Square Feet	150,000	156,000	99,719	225,000	186,000
# of Slot Machines	1,969	1,895	1,373	2,350	1,864
# of Tables	122	132	129	240	235
2014 Casino Revenue	$422,979,000	n/a	$203,247,000	$509,205,000	$687,436,000
Retail Summary					
Retail	The Shops at Crystals	Via Bellagio	n/a	Grand Canal Shoppes	Wynn Esplanade
Total Square Feet	500,000	44,000	35,744	875,000	99,000
# of Shops	57	12	16	160	25
Key Tenants	Louis Vuitton, Dolce & Gabbana, Tiffany & Co., Roberto Vavalli, Bulgari, Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Mikimoto	Bottega Veneta, Breguet, Chanel, Dior, Fendi, Giorgio Armani, Gucci, Harry Winston, Hermes, Louis Vuitton, Prada,Tiffany & Co.	Allsaints, Spitalfields, Sneaker Boutique, Dna2050, Jason of Beverly Hills, Molly Brown's Swimwear, Rent the Runway, Stitched	Barney's, Christian Louboutin, Tory Burch, Jimmy choo, Burberry, Fendi, Diane von Furstenberg, Michael Kors, Sephora, Swarovski	Alexander McQueen, Cartier, Chanel, Dior, Givenchy, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Manolo Blahnik, Oscar de la Renta, Rolex
Entertainment Summary					
# of Restaurants	16	20	13	38	13
# of Bars & Nightclubs	10	7	8	11	11
Convention/Meeting SF	300,000	200,000	151,500	2,300,000	284,000
Spa Square SF	80,000	55,000	50,000	134,000	n/a

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018784

Gaming Supply and Demand Analysis

Las Vegas is recognized worldwide as a premier gaming destination. From traditional card and dice games, to slot machines and race and sports book betting, the casino industry has flourished and evolved into an international phenomenon. A significant portion of the visitor revenue generated in the city is attributed to the gaming industry, which posted $9.6 billion in revenue in 2014.

The initial step in analyzing supply and demand trends within a given gaming market is to quantify the existing level of gaming inventory. To quantify gaming supply levels, a review of all competitive gaming facilities is performed. Once the market's supply level is known, an analysis of the demand for gaming facilities is performed.

Unlike traditional economic models of supply and demand, the price variable associated with gaming is largely determined by the consumer. Gaming is an intangible product: the consumer is purchasing the "experience" and "excitement" casino gaming offers. The price that the consumer is willing to pay for this experience is known as the "win," and is quantified on a per-unit basis known as the "win per unit per day" (WPUPD). Research indicates that the WPUPD, or the price a market can bear for gaming activity, is highly correlated to the level of available gaming inventory. The actual WPUPD attained by a market, say $100 per gaming position, and provides an indication of the marketwide demand for gaming. As will be further discussed, these demand levels within a market can be estimated through an analysis of the actual WPUPD attained by the market. Historical fluctuations in the marketwide WPUPD at various levels of supply can provide insight into the future demand for gaming. Further impacting the demand for gaming facilities in the market are current and projected trends in economic and demographic factors such as population base, employment, disposable income levels, and visitation statistics. In addition, seasonal fluctuations must be taken into consideration when analyzing demand trends.

Once the various demand trends have been identified, a variety of analytical methodologies may be employed to forecast gaming revenue for an overall market or an individual property.

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018785

Gaming Supply Analysis

The following table presents an overview of the competitive themed Casino Resort properties as of year-end 2014 operating within the Las Vegas Strip submarket. These properties contained 33,505 gaming devices and 1,979 table games.

COMPETITIVE SUMMARY

CASINO	OWNER	ROOMS	CASINO SQUARE FOOTAGE	CASINO SF PER ROOM	GAMING DEVICES	TABLE GAMES
SLS Las Vegas	Stockbridge	1,613	54,000	33.5	806	77
The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas	Blackstone Group	2,960	110,000	37.2	1,360	124
Bally's Casino Resort	Caesars Entertainment	2,814	66,187	23.5	999	58
Bellagio	MGM Resorts International	3,933	159,734	40.6	1,977	110
Caesars Palace	Caesars Entertainment	3,340	136,573	40.9	1,265	98
Aria	MGM Resorts International	4,004	200,544	50.1	1,726	101
Excalibur	MGM Resorts International	3,991	89,074	22.3	1,202	72
Flamingo Hilton	Caesars Entertainment	3,565	61,000	17.1	1,100	100
Harrah's Las Vegas	Caesars Entertainment	2,526	90,041	35.6	1,206	85
Luxor	MGM Resort International	4,408	100,000	22.7	1,250	75
Mandalay Bay	MGM Resort International	4,332	160,344	37.0	1,500	90
MGM Grand	MGM Resort International	5,001	161,675	32.3	1,850	98
Mirage	MGM Resort International	3,044	95,900	31.5	1,760	80
Monte Carlo	MGM Resort International	3,213	102,207	31.8	1,400	55
New York-New York	MGM Resort International	2,024	64,269	31.8	1,350	51
Palace Station	Station Casinos	1,028	84,000	81.7	1,713	37
Palms	George Maloof	703	55,689	79.2	1,317	45
Paris	Caesars Entertainment	2,916	95,195	32.6	1,014	77
Planet Hollywood	Caesars Entertainment	2,496	116,000	46.5	1,095	71
Riviera	Riviera Holding Corp.	2,072	103,800	50.1	1,000	30
Treasure Island	Phil Ruffin	2,885	55,680	19.3	1,335	61
Tropicana Resort and Casino	Onex Corp.	1,878	62,011	33.0	892	40
Venetian/Palazzo	Las Vegas Sands, Inc.	7,095	138,684	19.5	2,287	185
Wynn/Encore	Wynn Resorts	4,750	109,900	23.1	2,101	159
TOTAL		**76,591**	**2,362,607**	**30.8**	**33,505**	**1,979**

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018786

Gaming Demand Analysis

The win per unit per day (WPUPD) statistic provides the basis for the analysis and projection of table game and gaming device revenues. WPUPD is calculated by dividing total gaming revenues generated by a particular type of gaming unit by the number of gaming units available. Overall, the market for gaming devices exhibited high levels of demand and absorption as evidenced by increasing WPUPD and overall win levels during periods of increasing inventory.

The following exhibit summarizes the strong performance of the Strip gaming market within the industry standard "Casinos earning $72M and Over".

LAS VEGAS STRIP $72 MILLION AND OVER GAMING DEVICES

	YEAR	WIN (000S)	% CHANGE	UNITS	% CHANGE	WPUPD	% CHANGE
1	1996	$1,442,375	---	37,197	---	$106	---
2	1997	1,486,193	3.0	39,033	4.9	$104	(1.5)
3	1998	1,719,351	15.7	45,078	15.5	$104	0.2
4	1999	1,928,428	12.2	47,962	6.4	$110	5.4
5	2000	2,107,673	9.3	50,203	4.7	$115	4.1
6	2001	2,055,412	(2.5)	47,175	(6.0)	$119	4.1
7	2002	2,111,912	2.7	47,181	0.0	$123	2.7
8	2003	2,160,261	2.3	43,787	(7.2)	$135	10.2
9	2004	2,535,568	17.4	44,989	2.7	$154	13.9
10	2005	2,789,933	10.0	43,377	(3.6)	$176	14.4
11	2006	3,059,179	9.7	41,753	(3.7)	$201	13.9
12	2007	3,142,884	2.7	40,049	(4.1)	$215	7.1
13	2008	2,850,965	(9.3)	40,153	0.3	$194	(9.8)
14	2009	2,495,093	(12.5)	39,288	(2.2)	$174	(10.3)
15	2010	2,437,193	(2.3)	38,032	(3.2)	$176	0.9
16	2011	2,483,244	1.9	36,685	(3.5)	$185	5.6
17	2012	2,553,266	2.8	35,452	(3.4)	$197	6.1
18	2013	2,593,138	1.6	34,589	(2.4)	$205	4.4
19	2014	2,546,721	(1.8)	33,504	(3.1)	$208	1.4
AVG. ANNUAL % CHANGE			**3.2**		**(0.6)**		**3.8**

Source: Las Vegas Gaming Control Board

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018787

Gaming Demand Analysis

Demand for gaming can be classified into four primary sources: the leisure segment, local residents, tour and travel groups and convention demand.

LEISURE DEMAND

Leisure visitation to Las Vegas is enormous with visitors taking advantage of the year-round favorable climate and multitude of attractions. The leisure segment utilizes both table games and gaming devices and has a higher propensity to play table games than other segments. According to the Las Vegas Convention Authority Visitors Profile Study, in 2014 approximately 47% of all visitors mentioned vacation or pleasure, up significantly from 41% in 2013. Of those polled, 71% of all visitors said they gambled while in Las Vegas with an average gambling budget of $530.

LOCAL DEMAND

Local demand plays a part in gaming revenue contribution to the Las Vegas market. However, the local segment's impact on the Las Vegas Strip is moderate. According to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, 13% of locals gamble on the Strip with 45% gambling at least once per week and 75% gambling at least once per month.

TOUR AND TRAVEL DEMAND

Las Vegas welcomed a record 41.1 million visitors in 2014, an all time record. Las Vegas tourism generates more than $45 billion in economic impact for the local economy and supports 376,000 local jobs. Las Vegas is recognized worldwide as a premier gaming destination. From traditional card and dice games, to slot machines and race and sports book betting, the casino industry has flourished and evolved into an international phenomenon. A significant portion of the visitor revenue generated in the city is attributed to the gaming industry, which posted $9.6 billion in revenue in 2014.

CONVENTION DEMAND

Convention demand within the Las Vegas market is significant. Las Vegas was the most popular trade destination (with a 25% market share of the Trade Show Week 200 Shows in terms of net square footage) and third most popular convention destination in the nation. In 1990, approximately 1.7 million persons attended trade shows and conventions in Las Vegas; In 2014, convention attendance was up to 5.2 million, an increase of 8% annually over the last 25 years. Future convention expansion in demand is anticipated to see these rates of growth continue for the foreseeable future.

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018788

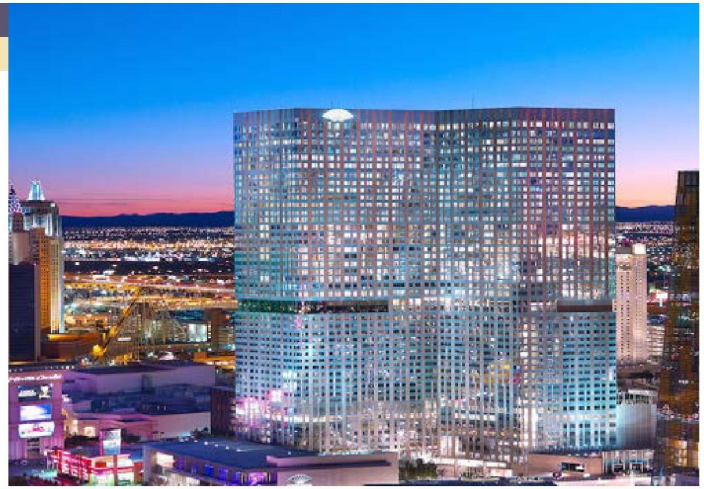
Multifamily Housing and Condominium Overview

With an increase in demand for luxury living accommodations in Las Vegas and a 100% sell out of the existing supply of recently delivered residential units, condominium prices have increased dramatically. The depth of demand far exceeds the amount of new supply forecasted over the next five years. In addition, the economies of scale associated with new residential, retail, hotel and office development on the Las Vegas Strip will only elevate the overall appeal of Strip living - and in turn push condominium values higher.

THE RESIDENCES AT MANDARIN ORIENTAL

3740 S. Las Vegas Blvd

DEVELOPER: MGM Resorts
SUBMARKET: The Strip
YEAR BUILT/SELLOUT: 2009
NUMBER OF HOMES: 225



STATUS	TYPE	SIZE SF	LIST PRICE	LIST PSF	SALE DATE	SOLD PRICE	SOLD PSF	HOA FEES
ACTIVE	3-BED/3-BATHS	3,922	$5,950,000	$1,517	-	-	-	$3,173
ACTIVE	2-BED/2-BATHS	2,998	$3,300,000	$1,101	-	-	-	$2,765
ACTIVE	2-BED/2-BATHS	2,998	$2,799,888	$934	-	-		$2,535
SOLD	3-BED/3-BATHS	5,628	$5,400,000	$959	3/23/15	$5,400,000	$959	$5,628
SOLD	3-BED/3-BATHS	3,922	$4,750,000	$1,211	5/20/15	$3,875,000	$988	$3,344
SOLD	3-BED/3-BATHS	3,980	$3,975,000	$999	3/31/15	$3,800,000	$955	$3,386
SOLD	2-BED/2-BATHS	2,755	$3,400,000	$1,234	5/20/15	$3,400,000	$1,234	$2,512
SOLD	2-BED/2-BATHS	2,755	$2,900,000	$1,053	12/31/14	$2,900,000	$1,053	$2,575

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018789

VEER TOWERS

3722 S. Vegas Blvd

DEVELOPER: MGM Resprts Internationa
SUBMARKET: The Strip
YEAR BUILT/SELLOUT: 2010
NUMBER OF HOMES: 674

STATUS	TYPE	SIZE SF	LIST PRICE	LIST PSF	SALE DATE	SOLD PRICE	SOLD PSF	HOA FEES
ACTIVE	3-BED/3-BATHS	3328	$2,995,000	$900	-	-	-	$2,053

PANORAMA TOWERS

4525 Dean Martin Dr

DEVELOPER: Laurence Hallier
SUBMARKET: Off Strip
YEAR BUILT/SELLOUT: 2006
NUMBER OF HOMES: 2006

STATUS	TYPE	SIZE SF	LIST PRICE	LIST PSF	SALE DATE	SOLD PRICE	SOLD PSF	HOA FEES
ACTIVE	3-BED/3-BATHS	4,820	$2,950,000	$612	-	-	-	$3,120
ACTIVE	2-BED/2-BATHS	3,414	$2,199,000	$644	-	-	-	$2,116

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018790

Multifamily Housing and Condominium Overview

TRUMP TOWERS

2000 Fashion Show Drive

DEVELOPER: Donald Trump
SUBMARKET: The Strip
YEAR BUILT/SELLOUT: 2008
NUMBER OF HOMES: 430

STATUS	TYPE	SIZE SF	LIST PRICE	LIST PSF	SALE DATE	SOLD PRICE	SOLD PSF	HOA FEES
ACTIVE	3-BED/3-BATHS	3340	$3,350,000	$1,003	-	-	-	$2,877
ACTIVE	3-BED/3-BATHS	3329	$2,099,000	$631	-	-	-	$3,038

BELLAGIO
Paris
NEW YORK
NEW YORK
Excalibur
MGM GRAND
Tropicana
LUXOR
MANDALAY BAY
MANDALAY BAY
DELANO

Las Vegas Retail Market

Overview

The Las Vegas Strip has historically outperformed competitive U.S. retail markets and continues to experience very strong absorption of new construction, low vacancy rates, and an abundance of retail tenants seeking to access high-traffic pedestrian locations. These factors together with controlled levels of new development will cause significant long-term rent increases across the submarket.

Increasing Levels of Visitor Spending – More than half of the 41 million visitors to Las Vegas each year spend time shopping along the Las Vegas Strip. Average per capita visitor spending on shopping, dining and entertainment during 2014 was $815. As demonstrated in the exhibit below, consumers are allocating a larger percentage of their total spending on shopping and entertainment.

ECONOMIC VISITOR PROFILE 2008 – 2014

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Average number of adults in immediate Party	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.4
Proportion of visitors with persons under 21 in their immediate party	6.0%	8.0%	7.0%	10.0%	11.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Proportion of visitors who stayed overnight	99.6%	99.8%	99.3%	99.8%	99.7%	99.8%	99.6%
Days stayed (average)	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.3	4.3	4.2
Nights stayed (average)	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.3	3.3	3.2
Proportion of visitors who stayed in a hotel or motel room	94.0%	96.0%	95.0%	95.0%	96.0%	96.0%	96.0%
Number of room occupants	2.1	2.1	2	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.1
Lodging expenditures (average per night)	$101.68	$75.78	$79.64	$84.04	$93.13	$83.62	$86.55
Proportion of visitors who bought a package or travel group trip	15.0%	15.0%	16.0%	18.0%	14.0%	13.0%	18.0%
Average cost of package per person	$746.69	$640.29	$651.02	$757.83	$743.65	$868.24	$815.14
Average trip expenditures of food and drink	$273.39	$250.32	$256.82	$274.69	$256.11	$278.95	$281.88
Average trip expenditures for local transportation	$59.26	$53.31	$62.87	$64.25	$57.77	$59.68	$68.83
Average trip expenditures for shopping	$121.90	$101.97	$122.80	$129.34	$149.29	$140.90	$149.77
Average trip expenditures for shows	$51.64	$39.87	$49.28	$47.52	$42.89	$38.45	$47.56
Average trip expenditures for sightseeing	$7.12	$5.77	$7.21	$10.24	$9.63	$9.29	$14.49
Average trip gambling budget	$531.98	$481.57	$466.20	$447.63	$484.70	$529.57	$530.11

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The Strip contains some of the highest visitor counts and retail sales per square foot in the world. High profile retail properties that would compete with a future luxury or lifestyle retail development at the Site are summarized below.

Located just south of the Site, **Town Square Las Vegas** contains a world-class 902,000 square-foot regional lifestyle center anchored by Apple, AMC Cinemas, Whole Foods, H&M, Old Navy, Staples, Guitar Center and a recently opened Saks Off Fifth Avenue.

Fashion Show Mall, a ±1.9 million square-foot regional mall, is located at the northwest corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Sands Avenue. It underwent a $1 billion expansion and renovation in 2003. Anchors at this high-end fashion mall include Neiman-Marcus, Nordstrom, Saks, Robinson-May, Dillard's, Macy's and Bloomingdales Home.

Built in 1992, **Forum Shops** contains ±510,000 square feet. Major tenants include Niketown and high-end fashion houses such as Hugo Boss, Armani, Burberry, Christian Dior, Ferragamo, and Valentino.

The Grand Canal Shoppes at The Venetian is located on the second floor of the Venetian Hotel. Built in 1999, this mall contains ±500,000 square feet. It also features specialty shops such as St. John, Cannaletto, Sephora, Ann Taylor, and Bebe. The Palazzo resort opened in early 2008 and The Shoppes contain over 50 international boutiques and is anchored by Barneys New York. Other boutiques include Coach, Ralph Lauren, Burberry, and Christian Louboutin. The newest addition to the retail sector is the Crystals Shopping Center which is located in the City Center Development.

Opened in 2013, **The Linq** is owned by Caesars Entertainment and is Las Vegas' newest dining, shopping, and entertainment district. The focal point is the High Roller, a 550-foot observation wheel -- the tallest in the world -- offering 360 degree views of the Las Vegas valley. This high-energy marketplace offers approximately 40 shops and restaurants in a 200,000-square-foot area. Restaurants and nightlife includes: O'Shea's Casino, Chayo Cocina, Off the Strip Bistro, Purple Zebra, Sprinkles Cupcakes, Starbucks, Ghiradelli, Yard House, Tilted Kilt and Flour & Barley. Shops include The Polaroid Museum, Pier 30, Koto, Bella Scarpa, 12A.M. Run, Chilli Beans, Goorin Bros., Kitson and Ruby Blue. The LINQ Promenade also features Brooklyn Bowl, a music venue that holds a capacity of 2,000-plus concert goers. Brooklyn Bowl has a restaurant, 32 bowling lanes, a section to watch sports during the day, nightly live performances and a nightclub area.

The Crystals Shopping Center includes high end stores such as Blvgari, Cartier, Christian Dior, Fendi, Gucci, Harry Winston, Hermes and Jimmy Choo. Crystals houses over 41 retailers and six restaurants.

The Cosmopolitan opened in December 2010 and contains approximately 38,000 square feet of retail space. The Cosmopolitan retail offers more than 60 specialty shops and boutiques including AllSaints, Spitafields, Beckley, CRSVR Sneaker Boutique, DNA 2050, Droog, Molly Brown's Swimwear, Monogram, Retrospecs & Co., Skins 612 Cosmetics, Stitched, and Vitals. Retail and entertainment attractions include a number of clubs.

Global Retail Location

The Site's location on Las Vegas Boulevard is one of the most highly trafficked shopping and entertainment districts in the world. Las Vegas' unique shopping experience is an integral component of its international identity as a premier entertainment and resort destination. Significant increases in tourism and exciting new resort developments are attracting new retailers from around the globe.

Strong Growth in Tourism and Conventions – Las Vegas tourism and local residents generate retail revenues exceeding $15 billion per year within a 5-mile radius of the Site. The Strip is as an increasingly popular destination for family-oriented and middle-market vacations as well as the nation's most preferred location for conventions and trade shows. During 2015, Las Vegas will attract over 42 million visitors and nearly 5 million convention attendees.

Strong Retail Trade Potential – As demonstrated in the exhibit below, the Site provides significant retail trade potential within a 1-, 3- and 5-mile radius of the location.

RETAIL TRADE POTENTIAL

	1.0 MILE	3.0 MILES	5.0 MILES
Total Retail Potential	$1,493,433,472	$7,414,447,521	$15,213,795,034
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	$23,288,030	$323,988,797	$1,796,642,859
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	$14,207,613	$86,794,421	$205,922,033
Electronics & Appliances Stores	$16,175,555	$185,460,629	$461,963,988
Building Material, Garden Equipment Stores	$21,169,480	$304,309,823	$566,970,483
Food & Beverage Stores	$36,293,886	$341,682,473	$946,812,080
Health & Personal Care Stores	$44,228,545	$191,845,413	$476,522,802
Gasoline Stations	$29,830,182	$288,545,852	$591,613,648
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	$434,856,181	$1,434,339,776	$2,325,409,263
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores	$11,921,901	$83,396,033	$226,418,173
General Merchandise Stores	$169,718,694	$909,634,225	$1,903,876,680
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	$65,322,811	$256,587,817	$519,998,572
Foodservice & Drinking Places	$526,781,823	$1,595,920,727	$2,437,743,867

Under Construction Entertainment Destinations Drive Retail Demand – In addition to mega projects completed in the past few years such as City Center and Crystals, new projects under construction surrounding the Site will significantly increase pedestrian traffic in the immediate area. Situated within two block of the Site, MGM's The Lot, AEG's The Arena, and Mandalay Bay's Convention Center expansion will draw hundreds of thousands of pedestrian foot traffic to the immediate area. Additionally, there are over 450,000 square feet of new lifestyle retail in planning at Tropicana and Las Vegas Boulevard with the Shops at Tropicana and Excalibur.

Expanding Pedestrian Synergies Between New Retail – The Crystals at CityCenter to the north and the Town Square Las Vegas to the south have expanded the retail inventory within three blocks of the Site. Each of the retail projects is a Strip-accessible development, encouraging greater levels of pedestrian traffic along Las Vegas Boulevard. Retailers located within these two projects include: Apple, H&M, Prada, Gucci, Versace, Tom Ford, Mikimoto, Balenciaga, Wolfgang Puck (2 locations), Katana, Louis Vuitton, Zegna, Rolex and Tiffany & Co.
Strong Residential Demand on the Strip Resort Corridor – The Resort Corridor contains the largest concentration of recent vertical high-rise developments in the nation with approximately 10,000 new residences within one mile of the Site. The amenity base on Las Vegas Boulevard has established the Strip as a preferred location for residents.

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2. Mandalay Bay Place

5. The Forum Shops at Caesars

8. Fashion Show Mall

3. Crystals at CityCenter

4. Miracle Mile Shops

6. Grand Canal Shoppes / 6. The Shoppes at the Palazzo

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018798

1. TOWN SQUARE LAS VEGAS

Town Square Las Vegas contains a world-class 902,335 square-foot regional lifestyle center anchored by AMC Cinemas, Whole Foods, H&M, Container Store, Gameworks, Old Navy, Staples, Guitar Center and a recently opened Saks Off Fifth Avenue. In addition, Town Center Las Vegas includes approximately 243,000 square feet of Class A office space. The property is approximately 90% occupied with retail rents ranging from $40 to $80 per square foot. Tenant sales are reported to range from $400 to $600 per square foot.

2. MANDALAY PLACE

Mandalay Place was completed in 2003 and is comprised of a 90,000-square-foot un-themed retail center that spans between Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino and Luxor. The property is currently 95% occupied with rents ranging from $60 to $90 per square foot. The center has an array of shops including Nike Golf, Urban Outfitters and Fredrick's of Hollywood. Tenant sales are reported to range from $500 to $600 per square foot.

3.CRYSTALS AT CITYCENTER

Opened in 2009, Crystals at CityCenter is situated on a 67-acre site at the southwest corner of Las Vegas Boulevard South and Harmon Avenue. With over 425,000 square feet of luxury and boutique shopping space, Crystals is the retail anchor of CityCenter's first phase. A select list of world-class retailers at Crystals includes Emilio Pucci, DKNY, Stella McCartney, Assouline, Bally, Bottega Cucinelli, Bulgari, Cartier, Christian Dior, Ermenegildo Zegna, Fendi, Gucci, Hermès, Ilori, Kiton, Louis Vuitton, Marni, Mikimoto, Prada, Tiffany & Co., Versace, and Yves Saint Laurent. Crystal's mantra is "Shopping.Dining.Nightlife," and it offers some of the Strip's premier restaurants and nightclubs including Mastro's Ocean Club, Wolfgang Puck, Beso Steakhouse, The Cup, The Pods, Social House, Todd English P.U.B., and Eve the nightclub. Crystals at CityCenter reported sales ranging from $900 to $1,500 per square foot with rental rates that range from $90 to $120 per square foot.

4. MIRACLE MILE SHOPS

Miracle Mile Shops contains 489,671 square feet and are located at the northeast corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Harmon Avenue. After Forum Shops and Grand Canal, this was the third major specialty retail project to open on the Strip and is contained within the Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino. Miracle Mile Shops boasts a 1.2-mile retail/entertainment complex with modernized storefronts, people movers, a backlit-sidewalk water feature, LED video screens, crystal chandeliers and contemporary, color-coded kiosks. The center features 170 specialty stores including Urban Outfitters, Ben Sherman, Quiksilver, bebe, Sephora, French Connection, Betsy Johnson, Frederick's of Hollywood, H&M and True Religion Brand Jeans. The property supports 15 restaurants, including Aromi D'Italia, Cabo Wabo Cantina, Pampas Churrascaria Brazilian Grille, La Salsa Cantina, Cheeseburger Las Vegas and Blondies Sports Bar & Grill. Miracle Mile Shops is currently 93% leased with tenant sales levels ranging from $800 to $900 per square foot with rents ranging from $65 to $85 per square foot.

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5. FORUM SHOPS AT CAESARS PALACE

Forum Shops at Caesars Palace, originally constructed in 1992 and expanded in phases during 1997 and 2004, was the first major specialty retail development on Las Vegas Boulevard. Forum Shops has a prominent position on the Strip, situated on the west side of Las Vegas Boulevard, north of Flamingo Road, between Caesars Palace and The Mirage, and is configured with a highly "themed" retail and entertainment environment. The property is 99% leased, attracting an estimated 22 million visitors per year and is generally considered the most dominant retail center on the Strip with 150 specialty tenants that include Anthropologie, Jimmy Choo, Coach, Louis Vuitton, Montblanc, John Varvatos, Victoria's Secret, Versace, Bvlgari, Cartier, De Beers, Harry Winston, Tiffany & Co., Abercrombie & Fitch, Armani Exchange, Brooks Brothers, Zegna and Cheesecake Factory. Tenant sales at Forum Shops at Ceasars Palace are approximately $1,000 to $1,200 per square foot with average rents ranging from $100 to $125 per square foot.

6.THE GRAND CANAL SHOPPES

Opened in 1999, the Grand Canal Shoppes at the Venetian was fully leased after three months. Fashioned after the Forum Shops, the property is heavily themed with a canal flowing through the middle of the concourse area. The property consists of 536,890 square feet including mezzanine spaces with current rents ranging from $85 to $110 per square foot. Average tenant sales range from $900 to $950 per square foot, and as a result of the project's immediate success, a second phase connected via pedestrian bridge to the Palazzo Resort was recently developed and dubbed Shoppes at Palazzo. The project is currently 94% leased and includes key tenants; Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, bebe, Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, Cache, Sephora and Valentino.

7.THE SHOPPES AT PALAZZO

Delivered in 2007 with a Grand Opening in January 2008, the 363,714-square-foot Shoppes at Palazzo is situated within the Palazzo Resort and is an expansion of the highly successful Grand Canal Shoppes. The Shoppes at Palazzo is a three-story enclosed specialty center with heavily themed, decorative characteristics intended to capture the essence of Italy. The center is anchored by Las Vegas' first Barneys New York and features many premier luxury brands including Jimmy Choo, Burberry, Van Cleef & Arpels and Piaget. Upscale restaurants include Emeril Lagasse's Table 10, Wolfgang Puck's Cut and Shimon Bokovza's Sushi Samba. The center is currently 89% occupied with tenant sales ranging from $900 to $925 per square foot and rents ranging from $80 to $100 per square foot.

8. FASHION SHOW MALL

Fashion Show Mall, originally developed in 1981, was expanded in two phases during 2002 and 2003 to its current size of 1.9 million square feet. The property has a significant presence along the Strip, with a 600-foot canopy structure shading the outdoor plaza area fronting Las Vegas Boulevard. The project includes seven department store anchors including Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's, Macy's and Neiman Marcus, as well as 250 specialty stores and restaurants. Fashion Show Mall reports tenant sales ranging from $802 to $983 per square foot and average rents ranging from $80 to $88 per square foot.

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018800

CompetitiveRetail Rent Survey

NO.	PROPERTY	DESCRIPTION	ANCHOR TENANTS	IN-LINE SHOP		VACANCY
				RENT/SF	SALES/SF	
1	Town Square Las Vegas Blvd. & 215 Las Vegas, NV	Sub-Type: Lifestyle Center Year Built: 2008 Total GLA: 900,000	Saks, Whole Foods, Apple	$40 - $80	$400 -$600	10.0%
2	Mandalay Bay Place Las Vegas Blvd. & Tropicana Las Vegas, NV	Sub-Type: Specialty Center Year Built: 2003 Total GLA: 90,000	Retail bridge between Mandalay & Luxor with shops, restaurants	$60 - $90	$500 -$600	5.0%
3	Crystals at CityCenter Las Vegas Blvd. S of Harmon Las Vegas, NV	Sub-Type: Specialty Center Year Built: 2009 Total GLA: 360,000	Upscale specialty retail project on Las Vegas Blvd. in CityCenter	$90 - $120	$900 -$1,500	12.0%
4	Miracle Mile Shops Las Vegas Blvd. & Harmon Las Vegas, NV	Year Built: 2000 Expansion: 2007 Renovation: 2008 Total GLA: 490,000	Specialty retail center at Planet Hollywood	$65 - $85	$800 -$900	7.0%
5	Forum Shops at Caesars Las Vegas Blvd. N of Flamingo Las Vegas, NV	Sub-Type: Specialty Center Year Built: 1992 Expansion: 1997 Rennovation: 2004 Total GLA: 650,000	Upscale/themed retail project at Caesars	$100 - $125	$1,000 -$1,200	1.0%
6	The Grand Canal Shoppes 3377 Las Vegas Blvd. S Las Vegas, NV	Sub-Type: Specialty Center Year Built: 1999 Total GLA: 500,000	Upscale/themed retail project at The Venetian	$85 - $110	$900 -$950	6.0%
7	The Shoppes at the Palazzo 3327 Las Vegas Blvd. S Las Vegas, NV	Sub-Type: Specialty Center Total GLA: 320,000 Anchor GLA: 85,000 Anchor Ratio: 27%	Barney's New York	$80 - $100	$900 -$925	11.0%
8	Fashion Show Mall 3200 Las Vegas Boulevard S. Las Vegas, NV	Sub-Type: Super Regional Center Year Built: 1981 Expansion: 1993 and 2002 Renovation: 2002 Total GLA: 1,868,219 Anchor GLA: 1,259,154 Anchor Ratio: 67%	Dillard's, Nordstrom, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Macy's-North, Forever 21	$80 - $100	$800 -$1,000	4.0%

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018801

Retail Construction on Las Vegas Boulevard

The following table summarizes the retail construction on the Las Vegas Strip since 2000.

PROPERTY	ADDRESS / LOCATION	RENTABLE	STATUS
2000 Construction			
Miracle Mile Shops (Desert Passage - Rebranded)	3667 Las Vegas Boulevard	490,000	Complete
Showcase Mall Phase II	3785 Las Vegas Boulevard	40,000	Complete
	TOTAL	**530,000**	
2002 Construction			
Fashion Show Mall Expansion Phase I	3200 Las Vegas Boulevard	450,000	Complete
	TOTAL	**450,000**	
2003 Construction			
Boulevard Collection	Las Vegas Boulevard @ Sahara	50,000	Complete
Mandalay Place	3950 Las Vegas Boulevard	90,000	Complete
	TOTAL	**140,000**	
2004 Construction			
Fashion Show Mall Expansion Phase II	3200 Las Vegas Boulevard	609,500	Complete
Hawaiian Marketplace	3742 Las Vegas Boulevard	80,000	Complete
Forum Shops at Caesars Palace Phase III	3500 Las Vegas Boulevard	167,000	Complete
	TOTAL	**856,500**	
2007 Construction			
The Shoppes at Palazzo	3325 Las Vegas Boulevard	364,000	Complete
Town Square Las Vegas	Las Vegas Blvd @ I-215	925,000	Complete
	TOTAL	**1,289,000**	
2009 Construction			
Crystals at CityCenter	E Harmon Ave @ Las Vegas Blvd	425,000	Complete
Showcase Mall III	Las Vegas Blvd @ Tropicana Ave	97,320	Complete
	TOTAL	**522,320**	

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PROPERTY	ADDRESS / LOCATION	RENTABLE	STATUS
2010 Construction			
Cosmopolitan	Las Vegas Blvd @ Flamingo Rd	38,000	Complete
	TOTAL	**38,000**	
2012 Construction			
Harmon Corner	3717 S Las Vegas Boulevard	110,184	Complete
	TOTAL	**110,184**	
2014 Construction			
The Linq	Las Vegas Blvd @ Caesars Palace Dr.	300,000	Complete
	TOTAL	**300,000**	
2015 Construction			
Shops at TI	Las Vegas Blvd @ Spring Mountain Rd	48,000	Complete
Grand Bazaar Shops	Las Vegas Blvd @ Flamingo Rd	26,500	Complete
	TOTAL	**74,500**	
Under Construction and Planned			
Alon	Las Vegas Blvd @ Riviera Blvd	100,000	Under Construction
ResortWorld	Las Vegas Blvd @ Desert Inn Rd	200,000	Under Construction
Shops at Excalibur	Las Vegas Blvd @ Tropicana	300,000	Planned
Shops at Tropicana	Las Vegas Blvd @ Tropicana	350,000	Planned
	TOTAL	**950,000**	
	TOTAL COMPLETED (SF)	**5,260,504**	
	TOTAL UNDER CONSTRUCTION (SF)	**300,000**	

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Integra Realty Resources
Caribbean

Appraisal of Going Concern

IGY American Yacht Harbor Marina
Mixed Use Property
18A-1, 18-B1,18-B and 18-W Remainder Estate Smith Bay
East End Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands
Client Reference: 23559

Prepared For:
Banco Popular de Puerto Rico

Effective Date of the Appraisal:
November 25, 2015

Report Format:
Appraisal Report – Standard Format

IRR - Caribbean
File Number: 172-2015-0181

IGY American Yacht Harbor Marina
18A-1, 18-B1,18-B and 18-W Remainder Estate Smith Bay
East End Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

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December 15, 2015

Roberto A. Soltero
Vice President
Banco Popular de Puerto Rico
PO Box 362708
San Juan, PR 00936-2708

SUBJECT: Market Value Appraisal
IGY American Yacht Harbor Marina
18A-1, 18-B1,18-B and 18-W Remainder Estate Smith Bay
East End Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands
Client Reference: 23559
IRR - Caribbean File No. 172-2015-0181

Dear Mr. Soltero:

Integra Realty Resources – Caribbean is pleased to submit the accompanying appraisal of the referenced property. The purpose of the appraisal is to develop an opinion of the market value of the leased fee (going concern) interest in the property. The client for the assignment is Banco Popular de Puerto Rico, and the intended use is for Commercial credit administration.

The appraisal is intended to conform with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP), the Code of Professional Ethics and Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice of the Appraisal Institute, the Principles of Appraisal Practice and Code of Ethics of the American Society of Appraisers, the RICS Valuation Professional Standards, the International Valuation Standards, applicable jurisdictional appraisal regulations, and the appraisal guidelines of Banco Popular de Puerto Rico. The appraisal is also prepared in accordance with the appraisal regulations issued in connection with the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery and Enforcement Act (FIRREA).

To report the assignment results, we use the Appraisal Report option of Standards Rule 2-2(a) of USPAP. As USPAP gives appraisers the flexibility to vary the level of information in an Appraisal Report depending on the intended use and intended users of the appraisal, we

adhere to the Integra Realty Resources internal standards for an Appraisal Report – Standard Format. This format summarizes the information analyzed, the appraisal methods employed, and the reasoning that supports the analyses, opinions, and conclusions.

The subject is an existing 250-slip marina with 5 commercial buildings containing a mixture of retail and office space types. The buildings contain 48,661 square feet of rentable area and were constructed in multiple stages; with the majority of the construction completed in 1993. The commercial space is 85% leased as of the effective appraisal date. The marina docks were constructed in multiple phases between 1991-1995 and are 52.8% occupied as of the effective appraisal date. The total site area is 2.76 acres or 120,226 square feet, which includes 0.64 acre or 27,878 square feet, that is re-claimed land. The property also includes 3.2 acres of seabed under the marina dock structures which is leased to the property owner from the Government of the Virgin Islands.

Based on the valuation analysis in the accompanying report, and subject to the definitions, assumptions, and limiting conditions expressed in the report, our opinion of value is as follows:

Value Conclusion*

Appraisal Premise	Interest Appraised	Date of Value	Value Conclusion
Market Value	Leased Fee (Going Concern)	November 25, 2015	$24,360,000

*Values expressed in United States Dollars

Allocation of Going Concern Value

	Amount	% of Total
Tangible Property		
Land & Improvements	$24,250,000	99.5%
Tangible Personal Property (FF&E)	$110,000	0.5%
Total Tangible Property	$24,360,000	100.0%
Intangible Assets	$0	0.0%
Market Value*	$24,360,000	100.0%

*Specifically excluded from the valuation are cash and equivalents and current liabilities.

The allocation of value components is based on the going-concern premise, which holds that the value of a business as a going-concern is equal to the sum of the values of the tangible and intangible assets. The allocation assumes continued operation of the marina business. Were the marina business to cease operations, the values of the individual components would likely be different from the allocated values of the going concern.

Extraordinary Assumptions and Hypothetical Conditions

The value conclusions are subject to the following extraordinary assumptions that may affect the assignment results. An extraordinary assumption is uncertain information accepted as fact. If the assumption is found to be false as of the effective date of the appraisal, we reserve the right to modify our value conclusions.

1. The subject property has a fueling dock and four fuel storage tanks located on site; including three diesel and one gasoline. There were no signs of contamination during our inspection and we have assumed that there is no adverse environmental impact in connection with the existing fuel equipment used on the subject property.
2. The parking garage at the subject slightly encroaches on the neighboring property to the immediate northwest. This land is owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands and we have assumed that no claim will arise from the encroachments.
3. For this analysis, we have valued the going concern interest in the subject property and have allocated the value of the personal property from the value of the real property. We were provided with financial statments from ownership that indicates the depreciated book value of these assets. It is beyond our scope to value these assets in use; therefore, we have assumed that the book values of teh personal property items shown in the statments provided by ownership are reasonably accurate for the purpose of this allocation exercise.

The value conclusions are based on the following hypothetical conditions that may affect the assignment results. A hypothetical condition is a condition contrary to known fact on the effective date of the appraisal but is supposed for the purpose of analysis.

1. No hypothetical conditions were employed in this analysis.

The opinions of value expressed in this report are based on estimates and forecasts that are prospective in nature and subject to considerable risk and uncertainty. Events may occur that could cause the performance of the property to differ materially from our estimates, such as changes in the economy, interest rates, capitalization rates, financial strength of tenants, and behavior of investors, lenders, and consumers. Additionally, our opinions and forecasts are based partly on data obtained from interviews and third party sources, which are not always completely reliable. Although we are of the opinion that our findings are reasonable based on available evidence, we are not responsible for the effects of future occurrences that cannot reasonably be foreseen at this time.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the undersigned. Thank you for the opportunity to be of service.

Respectfully submitted,

Integra Realty Resources - Caribbean

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Summary of Salient Facts and Conclusions

Property Name	IGY American Yacht Harbor Marina
Address	18A-1, 18-B1,18-B and 18-W Remainder Estate Smith Bay East End Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands
Property Type	Mixed Use - Marina
Owner of Record	IGY-AYH ST. Thomas Holdings, LLC
Parcel ID	1-07702-0135-00, 1-07702-0134-00, 1-07702-0133-00, and 1-07702-0198-00
Legal Description	Parcel Nos. 18A-1 Remainder, 18B-1 Remainder, 18B Remainder Estate and 18-W Estate Smith Bay, Nos. 1, 2 and 3 East End Quarter, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands
Land Area	2.76 acres; 120,226 SF
Number of Units	105
Gross Building Area	72,808 SF
Rentable Area	48,652 SF
Percent Leased	85%
Year Built; Year Renovated	1992; N/A
Zoning Designation	W-1, Waterfront - Pleasure
Highest and Best Use - As if Vacant	Marina oriented commercial use
Highest and Best Use - As Improved	Continued marina and commercial use
Exposure Time; Marketing Period	12-24 months; 12-24 months
Effective Date of the Appraisal	November 25, 2015
Date of the Report	December 15, 2015
Property Interest Appraised	Leased Fee (Going Concern)
Market Value Indications	
Cost Approach	Not Used
Sales Comparison Approach	Not Used
Income Capitalization Approach	$24,360,000
Market Value Conclusion*	$24,360,000

*Values expressed in United States Dollars

The values reported above are subject to the definitions, assumptions, and limiting conditions set forth in the accompanying report of which this summary is a part. No party other than Banco Popular de Puerto Rico may use or rely on the information, opinions, and conclusions contained in the report. It is assumed that the users of the report have read the entire report, including all of the definitions, assumptions, and limiting conditions contained therein.

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Extraordinary Assumptions and Hypothetical Conditions

The value conclusions are subject to the following extraordinary assumptions that may affect the assignment results. An extraordinary assumption is uncertain information accepted as fact. If the assumption is found to be false as of the effective date of the appraisal, we reserve the right to modify our value conclusions.

1. The subject property has a fueling dock and four fuel storage tanks located on site; including three diesel and one gasoline. There were no signs of contamination during our inspection and we have assumed that there is no adverse environmental impact in connection with the existing fuel equipment used on the subject property.
2. The parking garage at the subject slightly encroaches on the neighboring property to the immediate northwest. This land is owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands and we have assumed that no claim will arise from the encroachments.
3. For this analysis, we have valued the going concern interest in the subject property and have allocated the value of the personal property from the value of the real property. We were provided with financial statments from ownership that indicates the depreciated book value of these assets. It is beyond our scope to value these assets in use; therefore, we have assumed that the book values of teh personal property items shown in the statments provided by ownership are reasonably accurate for the purpose of this allocation exercise.

The value conclusions are based on the following hypothetical conditions that may affect the assignment results. A hypothetical condition is a condition contrary to known fact on the effective date of the appraisal but is supposed for the purpose of analysis.

1. No hypothetical conditions were employed in this analysis.

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018812

General Information

Identification of Subject

The subject is an existing 250-slip marina with 5 commercial buildings containing a mixture of retail and office space types. The buildings contain 48,661 square feet of rentable area and were constructed in multiple stages; with the majority of the construction completed in 1993. The commercial space is 85% leased as of the effective appraisal date. The marina docks were constructed in multiple phases between 1991-1995 and are 52.8% occupied as of the effective appraisal date. The total site area is 2.76 acres or 120,226 square feet, which includes 0.64 acre or 27,878 square feet, that is re-claimed land. The property also includes 3.2 acres of seabed under the marina dock structures which is leased to the property owner from the Government of the Virgin Islands. The legal description of the property is shown below.

Property Identification	
Property Name	IGY American Yacht Harbor Marina
Address	18A-1, 18-B1,18-B and 18-W Remainder Estate Smith Bay East End Quarter, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands
Parcel ID	1-07702-0135-00, 1-07702-0134-00, 1-07702-0133-00, and 1-07702-0198-00
Owner of Record	IGY-AYH ST. Thomas Holdings, LLC
Legal Description	Parcel Nos. 18A-1 Remainder, 18B-1 Remainder, 18B Remainder Estate and 18-W Estate Smith Bay, Nos. 1, 2 and 3 East End Quarter, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

Sale History

The most recent closed sale of the subject is summarized as follows:

Sale Date	January 19, 2007
Seller	MOF VI Limited Partnership
Buyer	IGY-AYH ST. Thomas Holdings, LLC
Sale Price	$25,500,000
Recording Instrument Number	document number 2007000531
Expenditures Since Purchase	Unknown

The sale price is consistent with our market value conclusion considering the date of the transaction and the market fluctuation since that time. To the best of our knowledge, no sale or transfer of ownership has taken place within a three-year period prior to the effective appraisal date.

Pending Transactions

To the best of our knowledge, the property is not subject to an agreement of sale or an option to buy, nor is it listed for sale, as of the effective appraisal date.

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Purpose of the Appraisal

The purpose of the appraisal is to develop an opinion of the market value of the leased fee (going concern) interest in the property as of the effective date of the appraisal, November 25, 2015. The date of the report is December 15, 2015. The appraisal is valid only as of the stated effective date or dates.

Basis of Value

Market value is defined as:

"The most probable price which a property should bring in a competitive and open market under all conditions requisite to a fair sale, the buyer and seller each acting prudently and knowledgeably, and assuming the price is not affected by undue stimulus. Implicit in this definition is the consummation of a sale as of a specified date and the passing of title from seller to buyer under conditions whereby:

- Buyer and seller are typically motivated;
- Both parties are well informed or well advised, and acting in what they consider their own best interests;
- A reasonable time is allowed for exposure in the open market;
- Payment is made in terms of cash in U.S. dollars or in terms of financial arrangements comparable thereto; and
- The price represents the normal consideration for the property sold unaffected by special or creative financing or sales concessions granted by anyone associated with the sale."

(Source: Code of Federal Regulations, Title 12, Chapter I, Part 34.42[g]; also Interagency Appraisal and Evaluation Guidelines, Federal Register, 75 FR 77449, December 10, 2010, page 77472)

Definition of Property Rights Appraised

Leased fee interest is defined as, "A freehold (ownership interest) where the possessory interest has been granted to another party by creation of a contractual landlord-tenant relationship (i.e., a lease)."

Lease is defined as, "A contract in which rights to use and occupy land or structures are transferred by the owner to another for a specified period of time in return for a specified rent."

(Source: The Dictionary of Real Estate Appraisal, Fifth Edition, Appraisal Institute, Chicago, Illinois, 2010)

Definition of Going-Concern Premise

Going-Concern Premise is defined as, "one of the premises under which the total assets of a business can be valued; the assumption that a company is expected to continue operating well into the future (usually indefinitely). Under the going-concern premise, the value of a business as a going concern is equal to the sum of the value of the tangible assets and the value of the intangible assets, which may

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include the value of excess profit, where asset values are derived consistently with the going-concern premise."

(Source: The Dictionary of Real Estate Appraisal, Fifth Edition, Appraisal Institute, Chicago, Illinois, 2010)

Intended Use and User

The intended use of the appraisal is for Commercial credit administration. The client and intended user is Banco Popular de Puerto Rico. The appraisal is not intended for any other use or user. No party or parties other than Banco Popular de Puerto Rico may use or rely on the information, opinions, and conclusions contained in this report.

Applicable Requirements

This appraisal is intended to conform to the requirements of the following:

- Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP);
- Code of Professional Ethics and Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice of the Appraisal Institute;
- The Principles of Appraisal Practice and Code of Ethics of the American Society of Appraisers
- The RICS Valuation Professional Standards;
- The International Valuation Standards of the IVSC;
- Applicable jurisdictional regulations;
- Appraisal requirements of Title XI of the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery and Enforcement Act of 1989 (FIRREA), revised June 7, 1994;
- Interagency Appraisal and Evaluation Guidelines issued December 10, 2010;
- Appraisal guidelines of Banco Popular de Puerto Rico.

Prior Services

USPAP requires appraisers to disclose to the client any other services they have provided in connection with the subject property in the prior three years, including valuation, consulting, property management, brokerage, or any other services. The RICS Red Book also contains requirements for valuers to disclose previous involvement with the subject property within twelve months. We have not performed any services, as an appraiser or in any other capacity, regarding the property that is the subject of this report within the three-year period immediately preceding acceptance of this assignment.

Competency

We hereby confirm that we possess adequate knowledge and skills to perform the assignment competently, including an understanding area/regional market conditions, and factors which pertain to the property type in question.

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Independence

We hereby confirm that we have no conflicts of interest or material involvement in the property which is the subject of this valuation; and that we are acting as unbiased, independent, external valuers.

RICS Valuer Registration

We confirm that we are in compliance with the RICS Valuer Registration program, which is mandatory for RICS members in the Caribbean region.

Currency

Unless otherwise stated, all financial figures in this report are expressed in United States Dollars.

Scope of Work

To determine the appropriate scope of work for the assignment, we considered the intended use of the appraisal, the needs of the user, the complexity of the property, and other pertinent factors. Our concluded scope of work is described below.

Valuation Methodology

Appraisers usually consider the use of three approaches to value when developing a market value opinion for real property. These are the cost approach, sales comparison approach, and income capitalization approach. Use of the approaches in this assignment is summarized as follows:

Approaches to Value

Approach	Applicability to Subject	Use in Assignment
Cost Approach	Not Applicable	Not Utilized
Sales Comparison Approach	Not Applicable	Not Utilized
Income Capitalization Approach	Applicable	Utilized

The **income capitalization** approach is the most reliable valuation method for the subject due to the following:

- The probable buyer of the subject would base a purchase price decision primarily on the income generating potential of the property and an anticipated rate of return.
- Sufficient market data regarding income, expenses, and rates of return, is available for analysis.

The **sales comparison** approach is not applicable to the subject because:

- This approach does not reflect the primary analysis undertaken by a typical investor-purchaser.
- There are insufficient sales of comparable properties in this market from which to derive a credible value conclusion.

The **cost approach** is not applicable to the subject considering the following:

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- The age of the property makes estimates of accrued depreciation very subjective.
- This approach is not typically used by market participants, except for new properties.

Research and Analysis

The type and extent of our research and analysis is detailed in individual sections of the report. This includes the steps we took to verify comparable sales, which are disclosed in the comparable sale profile sheets in the addenda to the report. Although we make an effort to confirm the arms-length nature of each sale with a party to the transaction, it is sometimes necessary to rely on secondary verification from sources deemed reliable.

Inspection

Mark J. Weathers conducted an interior and exterior inspection of the property on November 25, 2015. James V. Andrews, MAI, CRE, FRICS, ASA, CVA, also conducted an interior and exterior inspection on November 25, 2015.

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018817

Economic Analysis

Area Analysis

Location

The U.S. Virgin Islands are located in the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, about 90 miles (140 km) east of Puerto Rico and immediately west of the British Virgin Islands.

The territory consists of four main islands: Saint Thomas, Saint John, Saint Croix, and Water Island, as well as several dozen smaller islands. The combined land area of the islands is roughly twice the size of Washington, D.C.

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A mild tropical climate, scenic beauty, and status as a U.S. territory make Virgin Islands appealing for vacationers from United States and Europe. The islands host over 2.5 million visitors per year, most of whom arrive by cruise ship, and tourism is the dominant economic engine of the islands, accounting for roughly 70 percent of the total gross territorial product.

Each district has its own distinct landscape, mix and intensity of land uses, cultural identity, and prospects for future development. St Thomas is home to the capital and the territory's largest city, Charlotte Amalie, which has an estimated population of roughly 19,000 persons. St Thomas is the primary center for resort tourism, government, finance, trade, and commerce, but its rugged landscape limits the land available for agriculture and other types of land-intensive development. Charlotte Amalie is also home to a major deepwater harbor that is along major shipping routes to the Panama Canal, and it is just east of the Cyril E King International Airport – one of the busiest airports in Caribbean. St. Thomas has two cruise ship docks, and is the most frequented cruise ship port in the Caribbean.

The island of St John is just under 3 miles to the east of St Thomas. Cruz Bay is located on the western coast of the island and serves as its primary port and link to St Thomas. Nearly two thirds of St John is owned by the National Park Service and is off-limits to commercial development.

St Croix is largest of the three islands, in both land area and population. It is roughly 45 miles to the south of St Thomas. Its primary towns are Christiansted and Frederiksted. Overall the island is flatter and has more land available for additional agricultural, commercial and residential development than St Thomas. St Croix is also the primary manufacturing center for the Virgin Islands, with rum distilleries, a major watch-assembly plant, and; until February 2012, one of the world's largest petroleum refineries (which recently ceased refining operations).

History

The Virgin Islands were originally settled by the Ciboney, Carib, and Arawaks. The islands were named by Christopher Columbus on his second voyage in 1493 for Saint Ursula and her virgin followers. Over the next three hundred years, the islands were held by many European powers, including Spain, England, the Netherlands, France, and Denmark-Norway. The Danes developed the islands with plantation estates, and the estates boundaries are still used in legal descriptions for land to this day.

The U.S. took possession of the islands on March 31, 1917 and the territory was renamed the Virgin Islands of the United States. U.S. citizenship was granted to the inhabitants of the islands in 1927.

Government

The U.S. Virgin Islands are an organized, unincorporated United States territory. Even though they are U.S. citizens, Virgin Islands residents cannot vote in presidential elections. Virgin Islands residents, however, are able to vote in presidential primary elections for delegates to the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention.

The main political parties in the U.S. Virgin Islands are the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands, the Independent Citizens Movement, and the Republican Party of the Virgin Islands. Additional candidates run as independents.

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At the national level, the U.S. Virgin Islands elects a delegate to Congress from its at-large congressional district. However, the elected delegate, while able to vote in committee, cannot participate in floor votes.

At the territorial level, 15 senators—seven from the district of Saint Croix, seven from the district of Saint Thomas and Saint John, and one senator at-large who must be a resident of Saint John—are elected for two-year terms to the unicameral Virgin Islands Legislature. The U.S. Virgin Islands has elected a territorial governor every four years since 1970. Previous governors were appointed by the President of the United States.

Population and Employment

In 2008, the residential population of the Virgin Islands peaked at an estimated 115,852 persons. This follows five years of slow but steady growth of 1.0%, slightly slower than the U.S. annual average of 1.15%. Since 2008, population levels have fallen each year, to the 2014 estimated population of 103,961 persons.

Among the three islands, St Croix and St Thomas are nearly equally populous with St John having less than 4 percent of the total population of the Virgin Islands.

USVI Economic Indicators

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	5 Yr Ann Growth
Population	111,470	113,689	114,743	115,852	107,343	106,405	105,784	105,169	104,563	103,961	-0.6%
St. Croix	54,635	55,722	56,239	56,783	52,612	50,601	50,247	50,005	49,938	49,656	-1.1%
St. Thomas	52,528	53,574	54,070	54,592	50,583	51,634	51,266	51,051	50,610	50,316	-0.1%
St. John	4,307	4,393	4,434	4,477	4,148	4,170	4,134	4,113	4,015	3,989	-0.8%
Civilian labor force	51,159	51,159	52,670	52,630	52,861	51,424	50,729	50,577	47,558	46,784	-2.3%
Civilian employment	47,301	48,640	49,547	49,589	48,863	47,272	46,121	44,659	41,207	40,687	-3.3%
Unemployment rate (percent)	7.1%	6.2%	5.9%	5.8%	7.6%	8.1%	8.9%	11.7%	13.4%	13.0%	14.2%
Gross Territorial Product (GTP, Millions)	$4,457	$4,635	$4,836	$4,851	$4,583	$4,660	$4,351	$3,778	$3,792		-4.4%
GTP Per Capita	$39,984	$40,769	$42,146	$41,872	$42,695	$43,795	$41,131	$35,923	$36,265		-2.7%
Personal income (PI)	$2,723	$2,777	$2,964	$2,606	$2,602	$2,704	$2,661	$2,586	$2,233		-2.9%
Per capita personal income ($)	$20,620	$21,711	$22,658	$22,847	$23,931	$25,603	$25,084	$23,388	$21,353		-1.3%
Total Exports (Millions of $)	$10,476	$11,627	$12,962	$17,249	$9,728	$11,930	$13,314	$2,263	$1,285	$1,671	-16.6%
Refined petroleum	$9,376	$10,463	$11,242	$13,592	$8,327	$9,759	$10,486	$932	$32	$7	-20.0%
Value of construction permits (Millions $)	$390.20	$442.70	$266.10	$273.30	$261.80	$187.20	$179.10	$141.40	$156.60	$201.40	-4.6%
St. Thomas/St. John	$274.30	$217.70	$172.90	$183.80	$79.00	$80.60	$87.90	$85.10	$114.80	$142.20	16.0%
St. Croix	$115.90	$225.00	$93.20	$89.50	$175.90	$106.50	$91.10	$56.20	$41.80	$59.20	-13.3%

Source: Vi Bureau of Economic Research

The territory's Labor Force has also declined slightly, and there has been a steady increase in the unemployment rate; which was further affected by the closure of the Hovensa oil and gas refinery in 2012. Note that there was a slight dip in unemployement in 2014.

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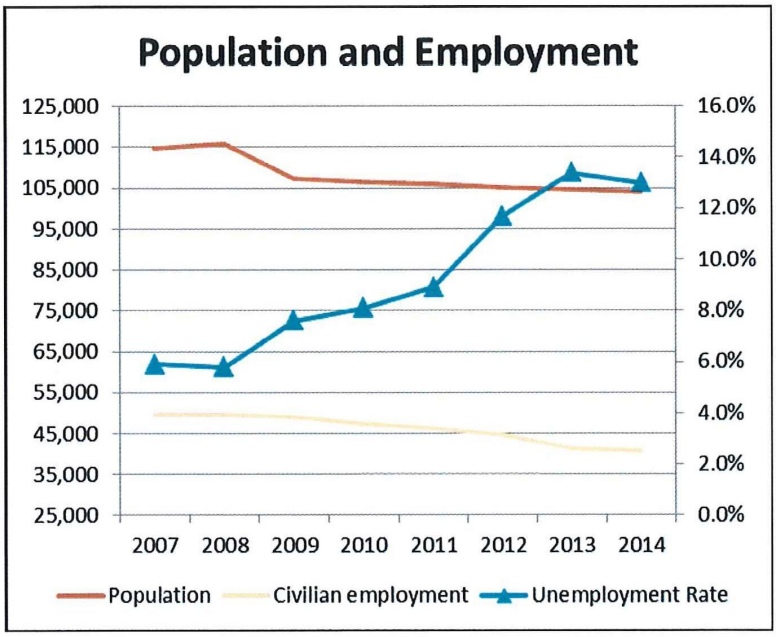

Industry

The territory relies heavily on tourism for economic stability. Additional industries include the production and export of rum; and until early 2012, the production of refined petroleum products (the Hovensa Refinery in St. Croix closed in early 2012). The Gross Domestic Product peaked in 2007 at $4.85 million, and declined to $4.14 million in 2012, and further declined to $3.79 million for 2013. Personal income per capita is also in decline from over $25,000 in 2010 and 2011 to just over $21,000 in 2013.

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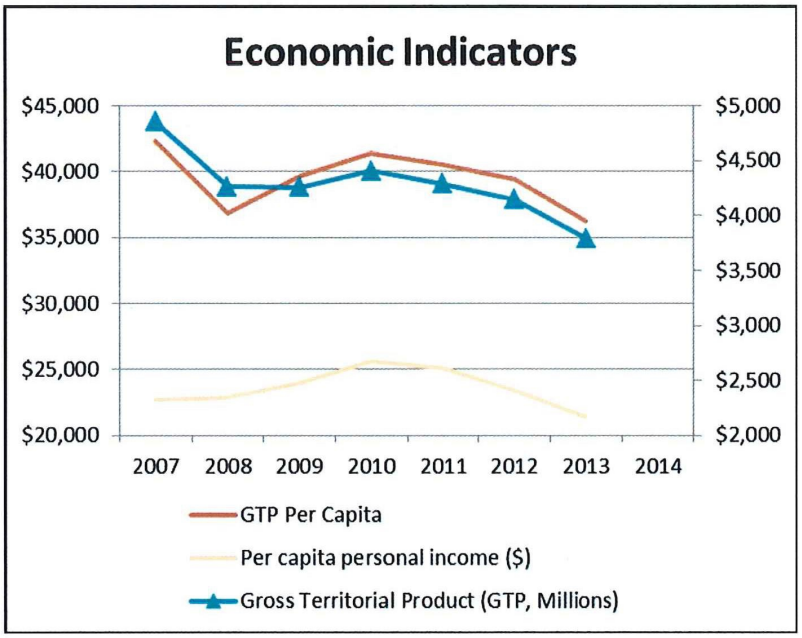

The closure of the Hovensa refinery, which was one of the territory's largest employers, also had a significant impact on exports which were prevously dominated by petrolium products. Otherwise, the territory predominently relies on the tourism industry to support the economy.

Commerce and Trade (Millions of $ Unless Otherwise Noted)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	5-Yr Annual Growth
Total exports	$12,961.8	$17,249.4	$9,728.3	$11,929.5	$13,313.5	$2,263.2	$1,284.8	$1,671.4	-16.6%
To U.S.	$12,182.2	$14,496.3	$8,495.3	$9,992.5	$10,994.8	$1,377.7	$265.4	$225.8	-19.5%
Refined petroleum	$11,242.1	$13,591.9	$8,327.3	$9,759.4	$10,486.1	$932.4	$61.6	$6.5	-20.0%
Other	$940.1	$904.4	$168.0	$233.1	$508.7	$445.3	$233.8	$219.3	6.1%
To foreign	$779.6	$2,753.1	$1,233.0	$1,937.0	$2,318.7	$885.5	$1,019.4	$1,445.6	3.4%
Total imports	$12,251.0	$17,861.3	$10,289.9	$12,153.9	$13,972.7	$2,966.7	$2,590.1	$3,391.8	-13.4%
From U.S.	$1,261.0	$1,214.6	$1,139.3	$1,548.9	$1,767.6	$1,719.4	$2,119.2	$2,144.5	17.6%
Crude petroleum	$0.0	$0.0	$0.0	$0.0	$0.0	$0.0	$0.0	$0.0	
Other	$1,261.0	$1,214.6	$1,139.3	$1,548.9	$1,767.6	$1,719.4	$2,119.2	$2,144.5	17.6%
From foreign	$10,990.0	$16,646.7	$9,150.6	$10,605.0	$12,205.1	$1,247.3	$470.9	$1,247.3	-17.3%
Crude petroleum	$8,204.7	$12,045.8	$7,085.9	$7,721.7	$10,340.9	$660.3	$0.0	$660.3	-18.1%
Other	$2,785.3	$4,600.9	$2,064.7	$2,883.3	$1,864.2	$587.0	$470.9	$1,247.3	-7.9%
Rum exports to U.S. (thous. of P.L.)	$28,725.1	$31,478.7	$38,445.3	$40,045.1	$35,801.2	$62,570.0	$68,335.4	$59,418.5	10.9%
Watch exports to U.S. (thousands)	$251.4	$183.6	$75.0	$52.0	$52.7	$55.6	$60.0	$76.8	0.5%
Ocean freight imports (thousands of tons)	1,092.0	1,080.0	1,065.0	1,091.0	1,157.0	1,975.0	931.0	866.0	-3.7%
To St. Thomas/St. John	851.0	774.0	685.0	612.0	720.0	1,199.0	564.0	558.0	-3.7%
To St. Croix (excluding petroleum)	241.0	306.0	380.0	479.0	436.0	776.0	367.0	308.0	-3.8%

Source: VI Bureau of Economic Research

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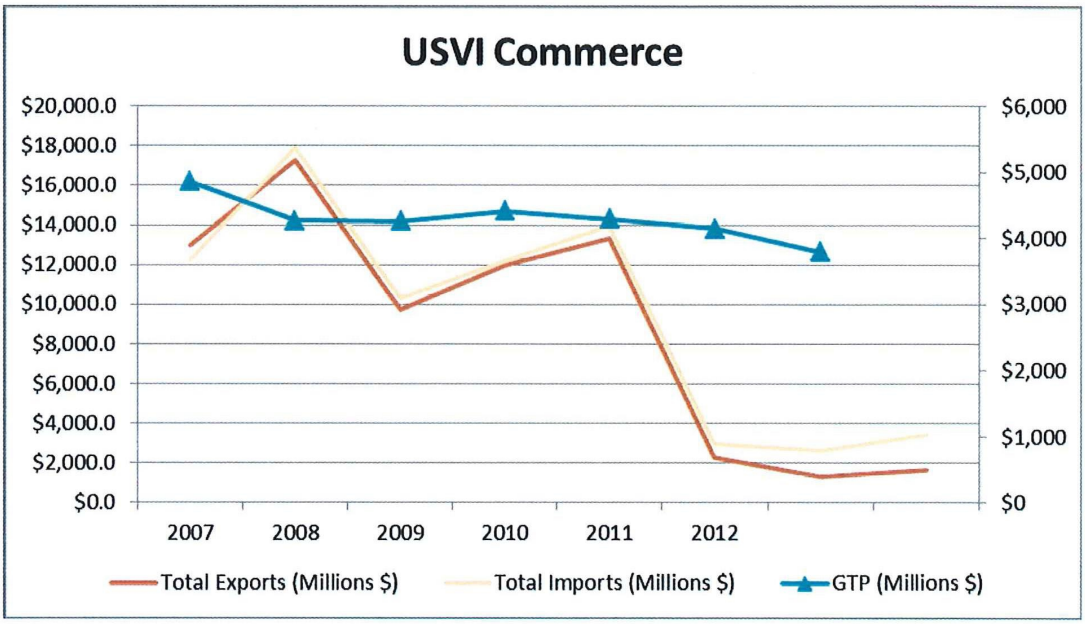

Over ninety percent of non-farm jobs are in the service providing industries, with the remaining jobs being in goods producing industries. Government, trade, transportation and utilities, and leisure and hospitality remain the industries with the largest number of jobs.

These three sectors account for 69 percent of all jobs. Professional and business services, construction and financial activities account for approximately 9 percent, 4 percent and 6 percent respectively. Manufacturing and information sectors account for about 2 percent each, while educational and health services account for 6 percent. Other services account for the remainder of jobs.

Tourism

The total number of visitor arrivals to the territory reached over 2.8 million in 2014, including both air and cruise ship arrivals. This represents 4.2% growth over the prior year. Total visitor expenditures are also growing, with annual growth in excess of 6% each of the last three years.

USVI Visitor Expenditures

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Visitors (Thousands)	2,601.9	2,570.7	2,606.2	2,435.2	2,245.0	2,548.7	2,687.9	2,642.1	2,701.5	2,814.2
Growth		-1.2%	1.4%	-6.6%	-7.8%	13.5%	5.5%	-1.7%	2.2%	4.2%
Total Visitor Expenditures	$1,431.6	$1,467.6	$1,512.6	$1,157.1	$1,021.3	$1,012.5	$1,085.3	$1,152.8	$1,232.2	
Growth		2.5%	3.1%	-23.5%	-11.7%	-0.9%	7.2%	6.2%	6.9%	
From Stopover Tourists	$863.8	$883.2	$929.8	$686.4	$687.4	$678.2	$740.6	$784.7	$851.0	
Day Trip Excursionists	$27.2	$25.6	$27.7	$29.7	$28.6	$28.0	$35.4	$35.4	$36.1	
From Cruise Ship Passengers	$540.6	$558.8	$555.2	$441.0	$305.3	$306.3	$311.8	$332.7	$345.1	

Source: Vi Bureau of Economic Research

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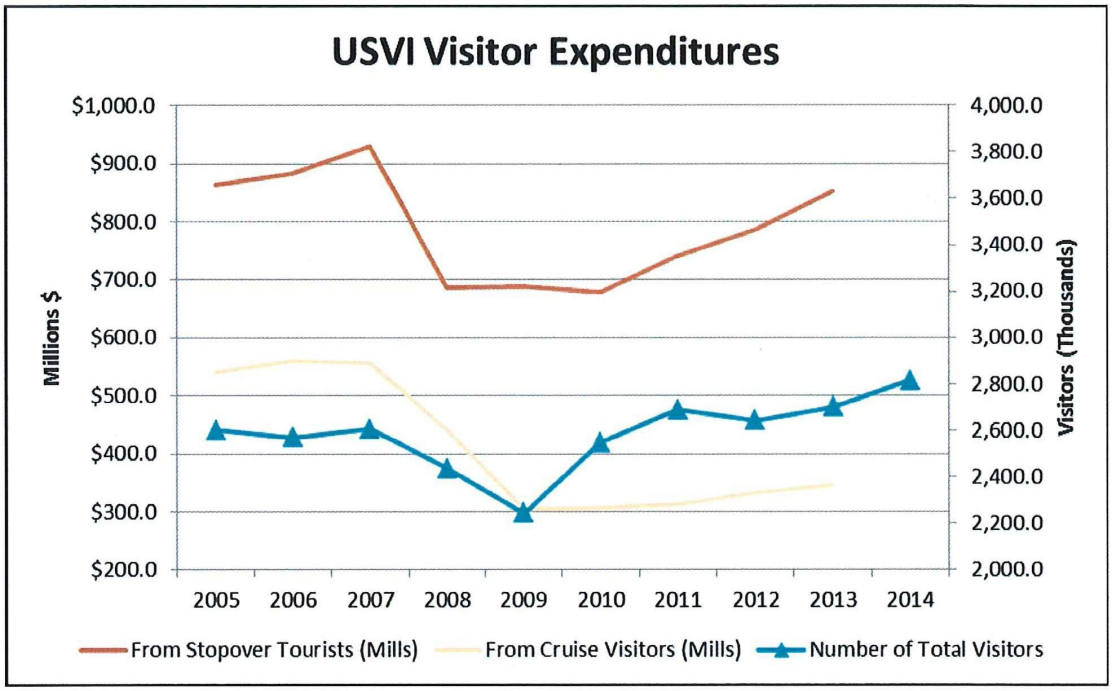

It is apparent, however, that the amount of visitor expenditures from cruise ship passengers has not increased linearly with arrivals since 2009; whereby the ratio was more linear in prior years. Cruise passenger arrivals grew 4.94% to over 2.08 million in 2014 following growth of 5.37% in the prior year. Total expenditures from cruise ship visitors grew 3.73% to over $345 million in 2013, following growth of 6.7% in 2012.

Cruise Ship Passenger Arrivals

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
St. Thomas / St. John	1,909,984	1,901,275	1,917,371	1,754,557	1,507,623	1,751,328	1,887,096	1,790,550	1,886,647	1,979,926
Growth		-0.46%	0.85%	-8.49%	-14.07%	16.16%	7.75%	-5.12%	5.37%	4.94%
St. Croix	54,502	35,191	7,146	2,510	105,093	149,418	158,186	117,165	116,436	138,055
Growth		-35.43%	-79.69%	-64.88%	4086.97%	42.18%	5.87%	-25.93%	-0.62%	18.57%
Total	1,912,539	1,903,533	1,917,878	1,757,067	1,582,264	1,858,946	2,008,991	1,904,468	1,998,579	2,083,890
Growth		-0.47%	0.75%	-8.38%	-9.95%	17.49%	8.07%	-5.20%	4.94%	4.27%
Cruise Visitor Expenditures (Millions)	$540.6	$558.8	$555.2	$441.0	$305.3	$306.3	$311.8	$332.7	$345.1	
		3.37%	-0.64%	-20.57%	-30.77%	0.33%	1.80%	6.70%	3.73%	

Source: VI Bureau of Economic Research
Totals for each island include 1st and 2nd ports of call; totals for USVI include only 1st port of call

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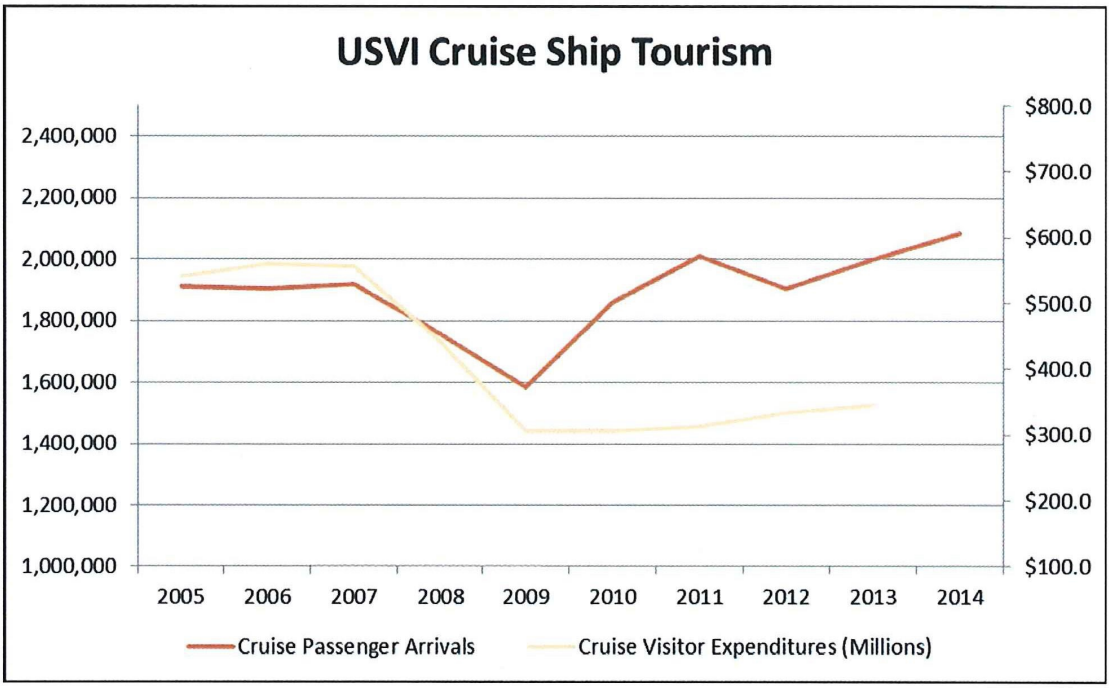

In terms of stopover tourists, the U.S. Virgin Islands ranks 7th in the list of the top tourism markets in the Caribbean, with 2014 stay-over arrivals of about 730,000. The year 2014 indicated modest growth in arrivals, with 3.90% growth over the prior period. The chart below illustrates the relationship between arrivals and GDP. We note that the continuing downturn in GDP is likely due to negative influences outside the tourism sector, such as the 2012 closure of the Hovensa oil refinery in St. Croix.

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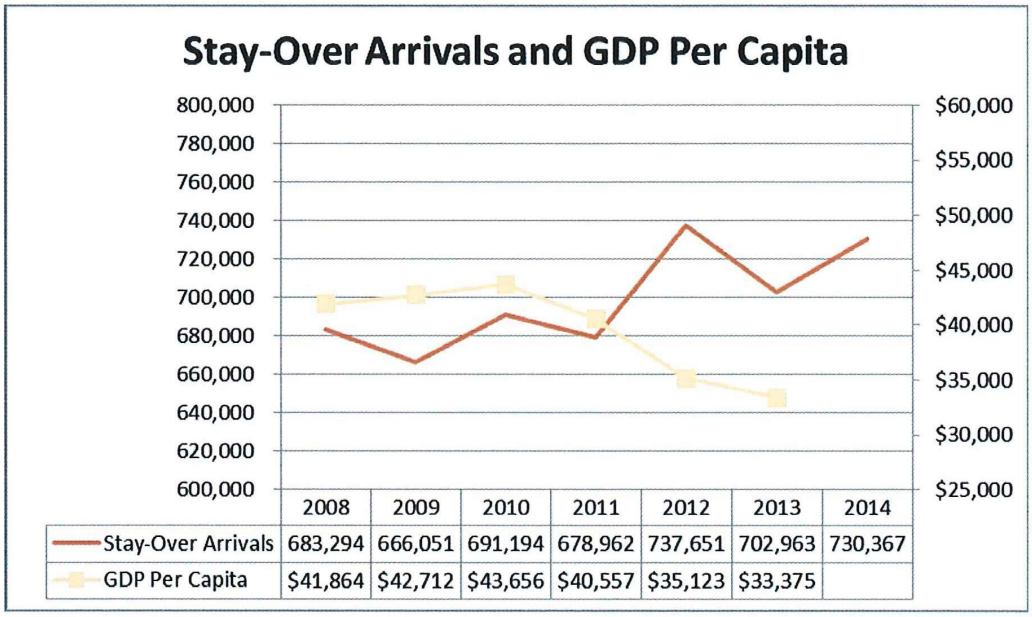

Source: Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research, WorldBank, Integra Realty Resources

Hotel Performance

Data from Smith Travel Research indicates 2014 occupancy for reporting hotels of 67.8%, up 3.29% over the prior year. The reported average daily rate (ADR) was $308.98 (up 0.51%), leading to Revenue Per Available Room Night (RevPar) of $209.53 (up 5.63%).

Hotel Performance by Country - USVI

	2013	2014	Growth
Sample Size (Rooms)		1,504	
Room Nights Available (Supply)	$1,775,819	$1,750,284	-1.44%
Room Nights Sold (Demand)	$1,145,860	$1,186,924	3.58%
Occupancy	64.5%	67.8%	3.29%
Room Revenues	$352,268,119	$366,739,620	4.11%
ADR	$307.43	$308.98	0.51%
RevPar	$198.37	$209.53	5.63%
Rooms in Active Pipeline 12/31	0	453	

Note: Values in United States Dollars
Source: Smith Travel Research; Note: Sample Size reflects the number of rooms within the STR participating hotels

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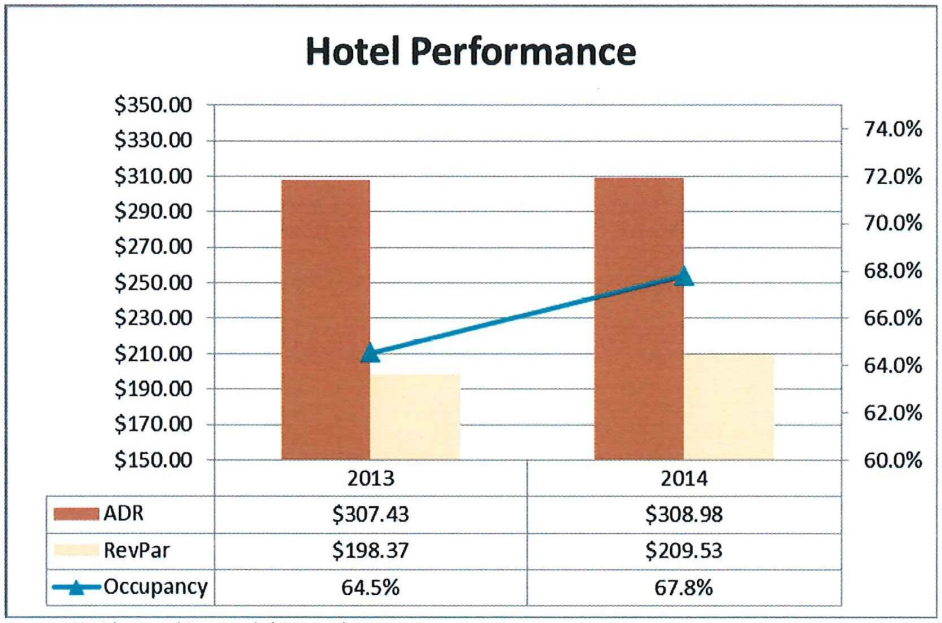

	2013	2014
ADR	$307.43	$308.98
RevPar	$198.37	$209.53
Occupancy	64.5%	67.8%

Source: Smith Travel Research (STR Inc.)

According to STR, there are 453 rooms in the active pipeline, which would add 8.6% to the existing room stock of 4,818 rooms. These projects include the 153-room, proposed Embassy Suites in the mahogany Run area, and the 300-room, proposed Hyatt Regency in Mandal Bay. In addition, a hotel project was recently announced on Water Island; however, the developers have not yet announced a brand or number of proposed rooms.

Housing / Property

As the supply of housing has increased in the last two decades, homeownership rates have also increased, although only slightly. Rates increased 1.9 percentage points between 2000 and 2010, and increased an additional 3.8 percentage points from 2010 to 2012. Average home prices dropped by 11.8 percent in 2008, but then increased in 2009 and 2010 by 4 percent and 12.3 percent, respectively. In 2012, average home prices fell 17.4% and then rebounded in 2013 with an increase of 22.1%. The average sales price in 2013 was $538,369. Presumably, much of the increased supply of new homes and condominiums has gone to non-residents and vacationers. Over the past decade, housing costs have accelerated at a far greater pace than resident incomes, putting home ownership beyond the reach of all but a few relatively wealthy islanders.

In 2013, St. Thomas and St. John had an average home sale price of $713,183, while the average home sale price in St. Croix was $306,083. While prices have not caught up with what they were in 2007, St. Thomas and St. John have seen some recovery in the overall housing market. St. Croix, however, continues to suffer from the closing of the Hovensa refinery. In 2014, the average single family home sales price in St. Croix was $334,167, while in St. Thomas it was $909,839. 2015 year to date averages are show an increase in average single family home price in St. Croix and a decrease in St. Thomas and St. John, with averages of $414,178 and $759,811 respectively.

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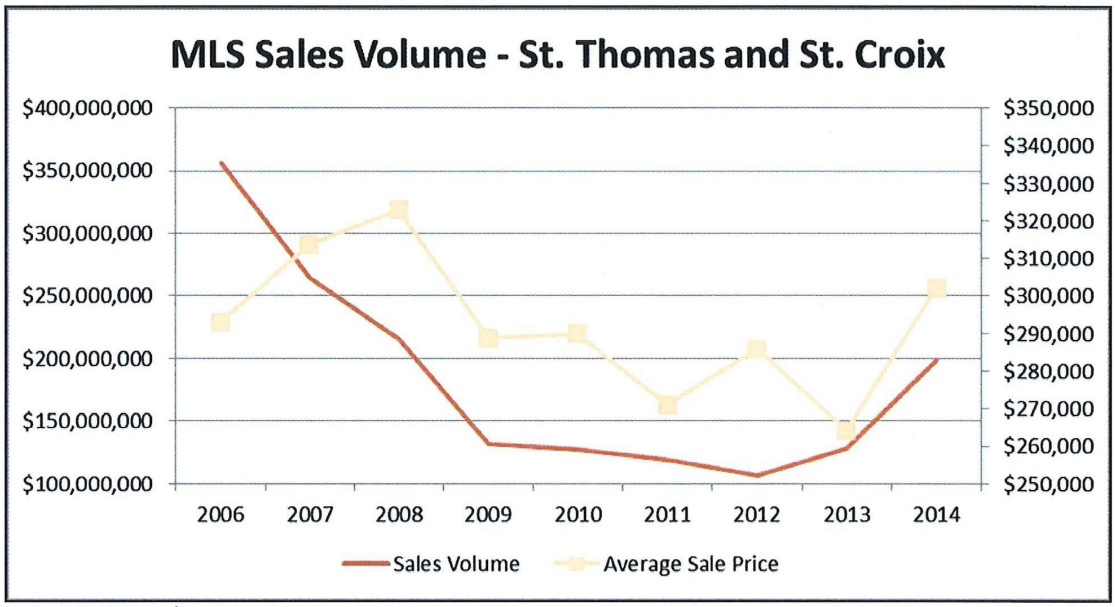
The current situation is that the recovering housing market and general economic conditions on the US mainland is slowly having a positive impact in the US Virgin Islands' real estate market in terms of overall average home prices as well as the number of homes sold. Home sales in the territory, while still lower than 2007 figures, have increased annually since 2012.

According to statistical data provided by the Multiple Listing Service, the value of real estate sales in the St. Thomas-St. Croix MLS grew by 54% in 2014 to nearly $200 million on 883 transactions; volume seen since 2008 and sales pace not seen since 2007. This growth follows 20% growth in 2013 which came after six years of declines. The average sales price surpassed $300,000, a level also not seen since 2008.



Source: St. Thomas/St. Croix MLS

Real Estate Ownership and Taxation

Ownership is "fee simple", under the U.S. flag. There are no restrictions against purchasing solely for investment, and no laws dictating when, if ever, you must build on undeveloped land. It should be noted that for 2006 there was a reassessment, and the tax rate changed to $3.77 per $1,000 based on 100% of assessed value (for residential property); however, there was an ongoing court challenge to the reassessment, and a federal injunction blocked tax bills until the issue could be resolved. As of December, 2013, the 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 tax bills have all been issued under the old 1999 assessed values and tax rates. This federal court injunction regarding the tax reassessment of VI property values had previously prevented the government from collecting property tax for at least four years, resulting in the government losing US$25 million a month. New assessed values as well as amended tax rates were released in conjunction with the 2013 tax bills in August, 2014. Subsequent tax bills were issued at a rate of two per year until August 2015 when the 2015 bill were released and the Virgin Islands became current with respect to its property taxes.

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All real estate transactions also require a Government Transfer Tax (stamp tax), which can be paid by the buyer or seller.

2% for property valued up to $350,000
2.5% for property valued from $350,001 to $1,000,000
3% for property valued from $1,000,001 to $5,000,000
3.5% for property valued over $5,000,001

Notable News and Developments

- On January 18, 2012, it was announced that the Hovensa refinery would be permanently shut down. This has had a major impact causing an economic downturn on the island, leaving 1,158 former Hovensa workers unemployed and many more employed by the company's contractors according to the United States Department of Labor. Recently, an auction of Hovensa's assets was conducted in New York City with multiple qualified bidders, and the assets were awarded to Limetree Bay Holdings, a subsidiary of ArcLight Capital Partners. Pending approval by the Virgin Islands legislature, ArcLight's operation of the oil storage facility will create a minimum of 80 jobs, with the possibility of more in the future. ArcLight indicated there could be a possibility of a limited restart of some refinery units at some point in the future.

- Both the Senate and the US House of Representatives passed the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act, and President Obama signed the act into legislation in the fiscal year 2015 which should help level the charter yacht industry playing field. Prior to 1993 and the imposition of a six-passenger limitation on US uninspected vessels, the charter yacht industry in the US Virgin Islands was thriving, contributing over $100 million in annual revenue and hundreds of jobs to the local economy. A large chunk of the industry moved to the British Virgin Islands after the six-passenger rule limitation was initiated by the US Government. The bill has recently been enacted into law, and the ability of the USVI to compete in this industry should be significantly improved.

- After an extensive search and vetting process, the USVI Government has selected a group of local and regional investors to develop a hotel resort on Water Island, just off of St. Thomas. There are apparently eight hotel brands in discussions with the developers for branding the property.

- A Texas-based EB-5 Regional Center has announced an EB-5 funded commercial project known as the Port of Mandahl Caribbean Conference Resort. When completed, the development is reportedly planned to include two full-service hotels, a golf course, a state of the art conference center, retail and commercial space, and high-end residential units. EB-5 is a type of economic citizenship program whereby the United States grants citizenship to investors of certain approved projects in areas where the economic boost is needed. Regional Centers are tasked with selling the investments such as limited partnerships to international buyers.

- The Margaritaville (Wyndham) Vacation Club is under construction in Water Bay on the East End of the island of St. Thomas. The project is a renovation of the 290-room Renaissance

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Grand Beach Resort into 262 timeshare oriented condominium units. The first phase on this project was completed in September 2015 and is open, while the second phase is currently under construction.

- The University of the Virgin Islands has announced plans to develop a medical school on St. Thomas, which will be operated in collaboration between the hospitals on St. Thomas and St. Croix.

Conclusions

Economic conditions in the U.S. Virgin Islands appear to be slower to recover than many areas of the region, particularly in St. Croix, where industrial development had previously been more of a focus than tourism The closure of the Hovensa refinery and the failure to facilitate a sale to a buyer who can re-open the facility as a refinery will continue to plague St. Croix until other new developments occur that can create new jobs. The assets of the refinery were recently sold at auction, but operating agreement with the USVI Government only states the buyers will use the oil storage portion in addition to constructing an asphalt plant on the property, which projects to only 80 jobs created in the immediate future. There appears to be ongoing resurgence in tourism for St. Thomas and St. John, and real estate activity appears to be improving; however, many businesses – even those catering to cruise ship passengers – continue to struggle. Our forecast is for continued improvement in arrivals and hotel statistics, but only gradual economic improvement for the overall territory.

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Area Map

Jost
Van
Dyke
Island
Hans
Lollik
Crown Mountain
474 m (1555 ft)
St Thomas
Charlotte
Amalie
Tutu
Water
Island
Nadir
Virgin Islands National
Park
Cruz Bay
St John
bing
Earthstar Geographics SIO © 2015 Microsoft Corporation © 2015 HERE

Surrounding Area Analysis

Location

The subject is located in the town of Red Hook in the East End area of the Island known as Estate Smith Bay. Red Hook is one of the three primary business districts on the island.

Access and Linkages

Primary access to the area is provided by Route 32 (Smith Bay Road), a major arterial that crosses the east end of the island in a generally east-west direction. This is the primary route through the town of Red Hook, one of the three major commercial centers of the island; with the others being the city of Charlotte Amalie and the Tutu area. Overall, vehicular access is good.

Public transportation is provided by Safari Taxi and provides access to all relevant areas. The local market perceives public transportation as average compared to other areas in the region. However, the primary mode of transportation in this area is the automobile.

The Red Hook Ferry Terminal offers passenger ferries and car barges on regular schedules to and from St. John. Passenger ferry service to the British Virgin Islands is also available.

The Cyril E. King International Airport is located about 8.4 miles from the property; travel time is about 25 minutes, depending on traffic conditions. The Charlotte Amalie CBD, the economic and cultural center of the island, is approximately 7.0 miles from the property.

Demand Generators

The demand for commercial space in the area of the subject is fueled by the popularity of the Red Hook business district. Red Hook is a centralized area serving the east end of St. Thomas, and features marinas, restaurants, bars, retail shops, and office space.

The demand for office space in the area has been down due to overall economic conditions. As the economy continues its recovery, the demand for well-located office space will increase as well. Retail space; however, has seen an increase in demand in this area over the past 12-24 months as shown by the low vacancy in the 3 major retail properties Red Hook; American Yacht Harbor (subject), Red Hook Plaza and Galleria Shopping Center.

Compared to the territory area as a whole, the local area has higher income levels. Population trends are similar except that the local area is growing at a faster rate than the territory.

Land Use

The area is suburban in character and approximately 65% developed.

Predominant land uses are retail and office uses, with some residential users nearby. Marina use is also prevalent in this area. The area contains several neighborhood retail/office centers within a few blocks of the subject along Smith Bay Road. These include East End Plaza which is three stories and contains mostly office space, the aforementioned Galleria Shopping center which will is anchored by a newly opened gourmet grocery store, and the aforementioned Red Hook Plaza which is a two story

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building with a mixture of office and retail. There are other small retail commercial buildings both along the waterfront and the inland side of the road; such as restaurants, bars and a convenience store/gas outlet.

In addition to the drawing power of these retail users, the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School is located approximately 1,500 feet west of the subject property.

During the last several years, development has been predominantly of retail/office uses. The largest recent development in this area has been East End Plaza, which was constructed in 2008. However, the completion of this commercial building coincided with the downturn in the overall economy in the territory, and the property has struggled to reach stabilization. There is also a newly constructed, small commercial strip center in close proximity to the subject called Crosswinds Center that opened approximately two years ago. Ace Hardware is the anchor tenant in this building, while the majority of the other commercial bays remain vacant.

There have also been two notable bar/restaurant openings within the past two years, both at the subject property. Near the subject, a Senor Frogs restaurant opened in November 2013 featuring a dining and nightclub atmosphere. Additionally, a tavern/restaurant called Tap & Still has opened approximately 450 feet southwest of the subject. A new Thai/Sushi restaurant is under construction within Red Hook Plaza, just west of the subject. These new establishments are indicative of the improving retail/commercial climate of the Red Hook area.

Outlook and Conclusions

The area is in the slow growth stage of its life cycle. There have been signs of increased demand as existing commercial space has been leasing up more rapidly over the past six months, showing the upside of the subject's area. We anticipate that property values will slightly increase in the near future.

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Surrounding Area Map

Marina Market Analysis

Marinas are not at all homogenous, and the various combinations of business and physical components result in significantly different results for the owners and operators. The two major types of marinas are coastal (usually found in saltwater inland waterways that lead to an ocean port), and freshwater (found on lakes). Saltwater marinas tend to attract larger vessels and require a completely different level of maintenance. Freshwater marinas typically cater more toward day-sailors and day-boaters who do not have personal space with which to keep their boats.

Typical marinas in both coastal and freshwater locations can include any combination of the following components:

- Wet Slips (covered and uncovered)
- Dry Storage (land)
- Dry Storage (stack)
- Maintenance and Repair Yard and Services
- Marine Dealerships (boat sales)
- Merchandise Sales (fishing, boating, sundries)
- Fuel Sales (gas and diesel)
- Equipment Rental

With regard to slip rentals (wet and dry), these spaces can be either rented (the traditional route), or sold as "dockominiums" and "rackaminiums." The sellout component became very popular in the last decade, and many marinas were converted to all or part sellout type enterprises. Part of the reason is that developers in recent times prefer to develop real estate for sale (condominiums or homesites) that surround the marina, and in turn could sell the boat spaces and then move on to another investment. The market for dockominiums (wet and dry) somewhat dried up during the recent recession, and many of the unsold units were subsequently rented instead of sold.

Another trend of development prior to the 2008 recession was for marinas within luxury resort communities that also have a residential component. These include 4 and 5-star resorts in the subtropical USA as well as the Caribbean. Typical luxury resort developments planned in the last decade would include a hotel (which the developer would license to a "branded" operator), condominiums and villas for sale, home sites for sale, and recreational components such as a golf course and marina. The sellout types of dock spaces fit well into the business model of the developer, as they sell other components and license the hotel operation to a separate entity.

Marinas also vary in size from small "mom and pop" or "lifestyle" businesses with less than 50 slips to large enterprises that attract institutional purchasers. Across the board, marinas are affected by economic downturns due to the leisure component of the boating hobby. During the last two recessions (2000-2003 and 2008-2009), many marinas went into foreclosure. This created difficulty for marinas to obtain financing.

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Coastal marinas along the eastern seaboard were fairly successful until the recent recession, with many documenting 100% occupancy or waiting lists. This may be partly due to increased environmental regulation limiting dredging new bodies of water or deepening existing ones. As marinas are typically close to inlets leading to the sea or inland waterways, they are typically in areas that are rich with aquatic life.

National Boating Trends

Because of the age, size, design, tenancy, quality, and location of the subject, it is likely to appeal to investors primarily on a national or regional basis. While national factors may or may not be indicative of the subject's market area, the national trends exhibited are generally indicative of movement in all submarkets. Real estate is typically analyzed on a market-by-market basis. Published secondary data and market studies for the marina industry on a local or regional level are scarce. Nationwide, the most comprehensive statistical reference guide for the marina industry is the Recreational Boating Statistical Abstract, published annually by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA). The most recent publication reports 2014 data.

According to NMMA, the boating industry generated $35.4 billion in sales and services in 2013, a 3.5% decline from 2013. This represented the first year of decline after three consecutive years of growth following the low point in 2010, of $30.4 billion, from the "great recession." The peak occurred in 2006 at $39.5 billion.

Of the 242.5 million adults living in the United States in 2014, 35.7%, or 87.3 million people, participated in recreational boating; a 1.8% decline from 2013. This is within the range of participation over the past four years which varies from 34.8% to 37.8% of the population.

New boat sales peaked at 912,130 in 2006, but have declined since that date with 2014 sales at 534,500 units, an increase of 0.44% from 2013. Before the recession in 2007, fuel prices increased, followed by increased unemployment and tightening credit. Luxury and leisure goods such as boats are typically the first things to be put on the back burner as people become more discretionary with their income. As a result, pre-owned power boat represented 64% of all boat sales during 2014, and new boat dealers have had to compete.

While boating participation declined recently, boat registrations have fallen. Boat registrations were up 0.08% to 12 million in 2014 versus 11.99 million in 2013. Florida led all states in boat registrations for 2014 followed by California, Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin, in that order.

The demographic of boat owners is largely middle class. In 2014, 95% of registered mechanically propelled boats were 26 feet or less, indicating more affordable, entry-level, trailerable boats. The majority (71.5%) of boat owners earn an average household income under $100,000. Over 60% of boating participants were between the age of 31 and 64 which signifies that the increase in boating population is younger.

National Marina Industry

Every December/January, Marina Dock Age magazine publishes an issue dedicated to trends in the marina industry. An article from the most recent issue in December 2014 indicates that the majority of

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marinas and boatyards continue to improve net profits, overall revenues, and occupancy rates, with 82% expecting stable or increasing occupancy rates.

The table that follows details marina occupancy rates for 2014.

Marina Occupancy Rates - 2014

	Occupancy Rate Range					
	Less than 50%	**50% - 74%**	**75 - 84%**	**85% - 94%**	**95% - 99%**	**100%**
Ownership Type/ Size	% of Respondents					
Government Owner	4.4%	22.2%	17.8%	17.8%	22.2%	13.3%
Corporate Owner	4.0%	32.0%	18.0%	14.0%	25.0%	7.0%
Private Owner	**2.0%**	**16.0%**	**19.0%**	**31.0%**	**14.0%**	**13.0%**
Small (1 - 99 Slips)	**5.0%**	**13.0%**	**11.0%**	**23.0%**	**15.0%**	**32.0%**
Medium (100 - 249 slips)	**5.0%**	**17.0%**	**21.0%**	**26.0%**	**21.0%**	**10.0%**
Large (250 - 749 slips)	0.0%	19.0%	21.0%	30.0%	17.0%	13.0%
Very Large (Over 750 slips)	0.0%	27.8%	16.6%	27.8%	27.8%	0.0%
Overall	3.0%	17.0%	18.0%	26.0%	18.0%	15.0%

Marina Dock Age publishes statistical information based on the percentage of overall respondents. The subject is under private ownership and has 98 boat slips which are expected to be increased to 108 slips. The largest majority (31%) of private owner marinas reported 85% to 94% occupancy rates. Overall, 58% of private owners reported occupancy rates of 85% to 100%. The largest majority (32%) of small marinas reported occupancy rates of 100%, with 70% of small marinas reporting occupancy of 85% to 100%. The largest majority of medium marinas (26%) reported occupancy rates of 85% to 94%, with 57% of medium marinas reporting occupancy of 85% to 100%.

The table that follows details boat slip and service rate changes in 2014 over 2013.

Slip/Service Rate Changes - 2014 Over 2013

	Decreased	**Stayed Same**	**Increased**
Marina Size		% of Respondents	
Small (1 - 99 Slips)	**1.9%**	**56.6%**	**41.5%**
Medium (100 - 249 slips)	**1.0%**	**62.0%**	**37.0%**
Large (250 - 749 slips)	1.3%	53.2%	45.5%
Very Large (Over 750 slips)	0.0%	28.0%	72.0%
Overall	1.0%	55.0%	44.0%

The majority of marinas kept rates the same between 2013 and 2014.

The table that follows details rate changes by service type.

Product/Service Revenues - 2014 Over 2013			
	Decreased	Stayed Same	Increased
Service		% of Respondents	
Sailing/ Training School	4.0%	48.0%	48.0%
Cabin/Campground/RV	**0.0%**	**35.0%**	**65.0%**
Event Services/Venue	8.0%	40.0%	52.0%
Tour Boat/Charter Fishing/Water Taxi	9.0%	45.5%	45.5%
Water Toy Rental	12.0%	18.0%	70.0%
Boat Rental	12.3%	16.3%	61.4%
Boat Club	13.0%	48.0%	39.0%
Pumpout	8.0%	65.0%	27.0%
Used Boat Sales/Brokerage	21.0%	32.0%	47.0%
New Boat Sales/Brokerage	18.0%	27.0%	55.0%
Self-Service Repair	7.3%	76.4%	16.3%
Haul-Out/Winterization Services	17.8%	54.6%	27.6%
Boat Maintenance/Repair	27.0%	30.0%	43.0%
Ship/Convenience Store	21.5%	36.7%	41.8%
Commercial/Retail Lease Space	4.4%	54.4%	41.2%
Restaurant	11.0%	28.0%	61.0%
Fuel	26.5%	18.0%	55.5%
Launch Ramp	8.7%	57.6%	33.7%
Moorings	11.0%	36.0%	53.0%
Dry Storage	**15.0%**	**37.0%**	**48.0%**
Transient Slips	17.0%	35.0%	48.0%
Leased Slips	**16.0%**	**28.0%**	**56.0%**

The subject has campground/RV pad sites and will also include cabins with 65% of respondents indicating increases in their revenues for this department. The subject has dry (land) storage with 48% of respondents indicating increases in this department. The subject has leased slips with 56% of respondents indicating increases in this department.

The table that follows summarizes marina expenses by age of the marina.

Marina Expenses - 2014 Over 2013			
	Decreased	Stayed Same	Increased
Facility Age		% of Respondents	
New (Less than 7 Years)	15.0%	40.0%	43.0%
Medium (8 - 35 Years)	8.0%	27.0%	65.0%
Old (36+ Years)	**6.0%**	**22.0%**	**72.0%**
Overall	8.0%	25.0%	67.0%

The subject is 21-25 years old. The majority (72%) of marinas over 36 years of age indicated increases in operating expenses.

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The table that follows details whether or not marinas will post a gross profit for 2014, based on marina size.

Marina Gross Profit - Will Report a Gross Profit			
	No	Do Not Know	Yes
Marina Size		% of Respondents	
Small (1 - 99 Slips)	**19.0%**	**17.0%**	**64.0%**
Medium (100 - 249 slips)	**16.0%**	**14.0%**	**70.0%**
Large (250 - 749 slips)	9.2%	14.5%	76.3%
Very Large (Over 750 slips)	11.0%	11.0%	78.0%
Overall	14.5%	14.5%	71.0%

The majority of small marinas (64%) reported that they would report a gross profit in 2014. The majority of medium marinas (70%) reported that they would report a gross profit in 2014.

The table that follows details changes in gross profit in 2014 over 2013.

Marina Gross Profit - 2014 Over 2013			
	Decreased	Stayed Same	Increased
Ownership Type/ Size/ Age		% of Respondents	
Government Owner	9.0%	34.0%	57.0%
Corporate Owner	17.8%	28.6%	53.6%
Private Owner	**22.4%**	**24.5%**	**53.1%**
Overall	19.2%	28.8%	52.0%
New (Less than 7 Years)	53.8%	50.0%	68.0%
Medium (8 - 35 Years)	21.5%	20.0%	0.0%
Old (36+ Years)	**24.7%**	**30.0%**	**32.0%**

The majority (53.1%) of private owner reported that gross profit increased in 2014. The majority (32%) of marinas over 36 years old reported that gross profit increased in 2014.

Conclusion

The majority of respondents indicated stable to increasing occupancy rates in 2014 over 2013. Most respondents had an occupancy rate above 85%. Most respondents also indicated increased revenues. These are all positive indications for the marina industry.

An article in Marina Dock Trends states that the market is improving for marina properties. The article reports that pre-recession, marina capitalization rates were around 5% to 6%. Post-recession through May 2014, capitalization rates were around 10%. Since May 2014, capitalization rates for marinas began decreasing.

Though the boating industry experienced a decline in revenue and participation during the recession, demand for slips far exceeds the current supply. Many industry experts as well as local brokers in

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marina sales have indicated that now is a good time to invest in a marina, despite the previous recession and limited financing.

Competitive Marinas

The most significant supply and demand indicators for the subject are rental and occupancy rates experienced by directly competing properties. The operation of a pleasure craft marina provides revenue sources which include a mix of various rental, sales and services for the pleasure craft operators. Principle revenue stream for pleasure craft marinas includes in-water slips, fuel sales, and building rent.

The subject's asking and average contract rates are shown in the table that follows. The current operator is leasing the marina slips by linear feet of vessel length. We have then converted this rental income into a rental rate per linear foot of dock space. The subject offers slip rental on a daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal and annual basis. The contracted rental rates represent a blend of these rates, from daily tenants to long term tenants on annual leases. According to management, approximately 60% of the occupants at any given time are seasonal or annual tenants.

Marina Rent Roll

Year	# of Slips	Average LF per Slip	Total Annual LF Available	Total LF Occupied	Annual Occupancy Rate	Total Rental Revenue	Average Monthly Rental Rate/LF
2010	105	53.29	2,042,170	1,379,235	67.5%	$1,551,721	$34.22
2011	105	53.18	2,038,110	1,298,157	63.7%	$1,490,744	$34.93
2012	105	54.24	2,078,880	1,155,377	55.6%	$1,290,526	$33.97
2013	105	54.10	2,073,200	1,206,388	58.2%	$1,362,951	$34.36
2014	105	54.10	2,073,200	1,233,672	59.5%	$1,513,100	$37.31
2015 (Annualized)	105	54.10	2,073,200	1,172,976	56.6%	$1,438,110	$37.29
Average	105	54	2,063,127	1,240,968	60.1%	$1,441,192	$35.35

We weren't provided with a current rent roll for the marina slips but we were provided with monthly historical occupancy and rental rate data. With the transient nature of marina tenants, a historical rent and occupancy figures are a more accurate indication of the income properties of the marina. Rental rates at the subject, and in this market, are based on a rate per linear foot of vessel length. As discussed earlier, the subject contains 105 wet slips with a total of 5,680 linear feet of rentable dock space, which indicates a total of 2,073,200 rentable linear feet per year.

As of the effective valuation date, the subject marina has experienced an overall occupancy rate of 56.3% for the year to date 2015. We have looked at occupancy rates on an average, annual basis due to the seasonal characteristics of this property type in this market. Again, due to the transient nature of the tenants in this property type and the short term nature of the leases which can range from daily to annually, the overall occupancy rate will be lower than other commercial property types such as lodging, multifamily, retail and office. The subject's current occupancy rate is slightly lower than historical rates, but the property is considered to be at stabilized occupancy.

The weighted average contract rate is $37.29 per linear foot per month for the year to date 2015, which equates to an average contract rate of $447.50 per linear foot per year.

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The weighted average contract rate is $37.29 per linear foot per month for the year to date 2015, which equates to an average contract rate of $447.50 per linear foot per year.

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Competitive Marinas

The competitive marina rates are shown on the page that follows. It is our opinion that the subject's rates are at market levels; based on its age, location, and condition.

Competitive Marinas - St. Thomas

Marina	# of Wet Slips	Length	Avg. Monthly Wet Slip Rental/LF	Avg. Annual Wet Slip Rental/LF	Services/Amenities
Sapphire Beach Resort and Marina 6720 Estate Smith Bay St. Thomas, VI	67	50'	$18.00	$216.00	Marina is located in a beachfront resort property. Amenties include 24/7 security, dock power/AC hookup, WIFI, fresh water hookup, showers and hotel resort amenties. Some of these docks are privately owned, but rental rates are typical throughout. This is an uprotected marina.
Compass Point Marina 41-6-1 & 41-7 Estate Frydenhoj St. Thomas, VI	38 59 46 10	<30' 31'-40' 41'-50' >50'	$18.30 $16.61 $16.89 $17.67	$219.60 $199.32 $202.68 $212.04	This marina is also located in Benner Bay and includes a combination of apartments, retail and office space containing 25,552 square feet of rentable area. Amenities include, fresh water and electricity and finger peirs.
Yacht Haven Grande Long Bay Rd, Charlotte Amalie St. Thomas, VI	46	<80' 80'-175' >175"	$84.25 $129.12 $164.40	$1,011.05 $1,549.43 $1,972.83	This marina is located in Long Bay near Charlotte Amalie in St. Thomas. This is considered the premier luxury marina in the U.S. Virgin Islands and has the ability to berth megayachts up to 450 feet in length. There is 80,000 sf of high-end retail space at the property. Marina amenities include electricity and fresh water, shower facilities, swimming pool and spa, business services, fueling, waste management services, 24/7 security, laundry service and provisioning options. The rental rate displayed is an average of summer and winter rates, and does not include utilities or service amenities.
Crown Bay Marina 8167 Sub Base St. Thomas, VI	99	<55' 56'-75' 76'-130' 131'-200'	$82.13 $109.50 $126.23 $142.96	$985.50 $1,314.00 $1,514.75 $1,715.50	Full-service marina able to berth vessels up to 200 feet in length and located less than 2.0 miles from the Cyril E. King International Airport. This property also contains a significant amount of retail/commercial building space with various shops, restaurants and office space. Amenities include electricity, fresh water, fueling, full-service conciege desk, free wifi, satellite TV, 24/7 security and showers.
Oasis Cove Marina 135 Estate Frydenhoj St. Thomas, VI	26	<30' 30' - 60'	$26.67 $24.44	$320.00 $293.33	Located in Benner Bay, this marina was recently renovated within the past two years. Amenities include 24/7 security, fresh water hookups, electricity, WIFI, and good overall construction. The marina requires a one-year contract for wet slip rentals.
American Yacht Harbor 18A-1, 18-B1,18-B and 18-W Remainder Estate Smith Bay St. Thomas, VI	98 7	<49' 50' - 79' >80' T-Heads	$43.50 $50.80 $102.81 $102.81	$521.95 $609.55 $1,233.70 $1,233.70	Subject marina that is part of a full scale, mixed use property that contains various retail and office compontents. There are a total of 9 restaurants on this property and many more shops and stores throughout. Marina amenities include electricity, fresh water, 24/7 security, WIFI and on-site fuel.

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Competitive Marinas - British Virgin Islands

Marina	# of Wet Slips	Length	Avg. Monthly Wet Slip Rental/LF	Avg. Annual Wet Slip Rental/LF	Services/Amenities
Soper's Hole Marina West End Tortola, BVI	45	<80' >80'	$38.02 $57.03	$456.25 $684.38	Mixed-use marina property that contains shops, restaurants, offices and water-sports rentals in addition to 20 protected moorings and 45 wet slips. Amenities include electricity, fresh water, fueling, showers, waste management, and free wifi in addition to haul-out and repair and maintenance services.
Nany Cay Tortola, BVI	180	35'-49' 50'-100' <100' T-Head	$43.95 $51.86 $78.32 $71.78	$527.43 $622.33 $939.88 $861.40	This is a protected marina located on the southern coast of Tortola, between Road Town and West End. The property contains retail, office and hotel uses on site. Amenities include electricity, fresh water, showers, waste disposal and haul and repairs and maintenance services. This marina also includes dry slips which are not included in this analysis.
Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbor St Thomas Bay Virgin Gorda, BVI	120	<55' 56'-79' <80'	$34.98 $76.04 $83.65	$419.75 $912.50 $1,003.75	This marina is located in Spanish Town on the island of Virgin Gorda. Both wet and dry slips are offered but the dry slip rates have not been considered in this analysis. There are some retail and office components at the property. Marina amenities include electricity, fresh water, showers, garbage disposal, laundry, provisioning and fueling.

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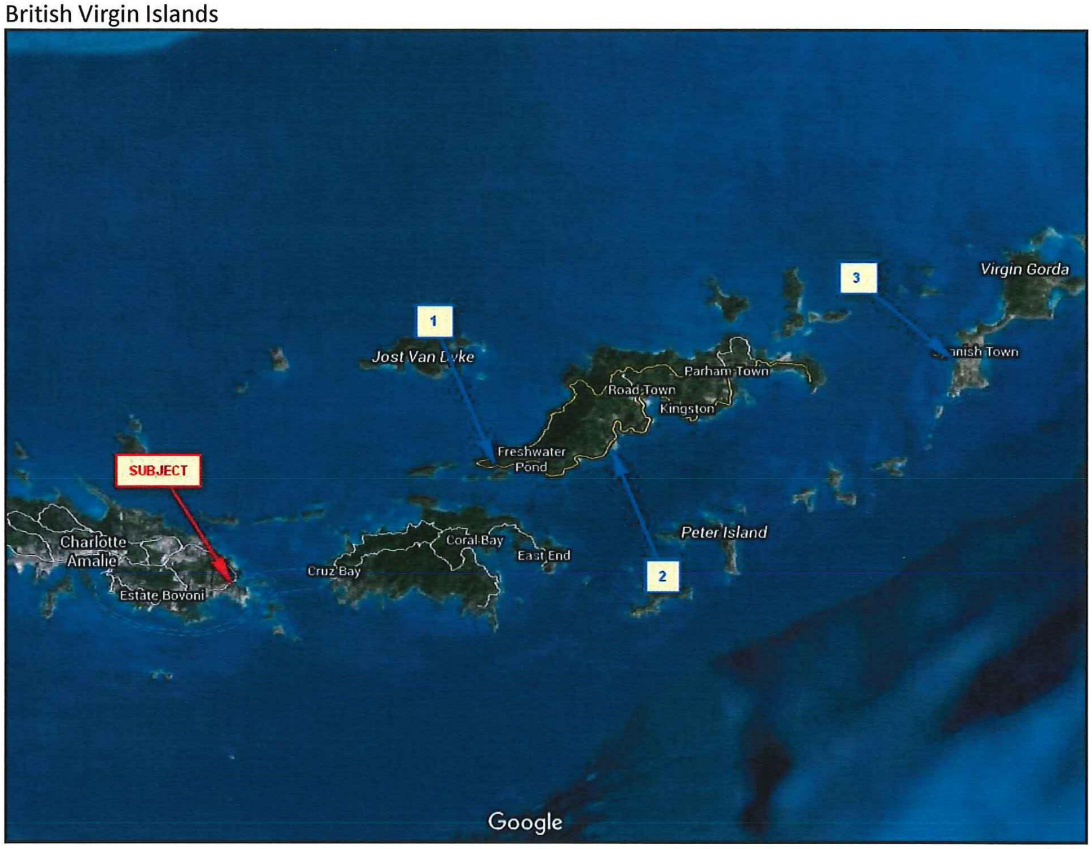
Maps of Competitive Marinas

St. Thomas

British Virgin Islands



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Of the comparable marinas in St. Thomas, Yacht Haven Grande is the most superior in terms of location, quality and amenities. This marina is typically geared to extremely large vessels such as mega-yachts. Crown Bay Marina is slightly inferior to Yacht Haven Grande, but is still superior to the subject in quality and amenities. Sapphire Beach Resort, Compass Point and Oasis Cove are all considered to be inferior marinas to the subject based on location, quality and amenities offered. These marinas mostly cater to live-aboards and smaller vessels.

The most comparable properties are located in the British Virgin Islands (BVI). Nany Cay and Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbor are slightly superior to Soper's Hole, but they are all similar in quality and amenities as the subject property. The location of the subject in St. Thomas, and its specific location within St. Thomas, is considered superior based on convenience.

The majority of the subject's wet slips (98 out of 105) allow for vessels less than 80'. In this size range, the comparable marinas in St. Thomas range from $199.32 - $1,314 with an average of $578.38 per linear foot. The comparable marinas in the BVI range from $419.75 - $912.50 with an average of $587.65 per linear foot in this size range. The subject's asking rates for this size vessel averages approximately $565.75, which is slightly below average but reasonable.

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Property Analysis

Land Description and Analysis

Land Area Summary

Parcel ID	Address	SF	Acres
1-07702-0135-00	18A-1 Remainder Smith Bay	9,583	0.22
1-07702-0134-00	18B-1 Remainder Smith Bay	20,909	0.48
1-07702-0133-00	18B Remainder Smith Bay	61,855	1.42
1-07702-0198-00	18-W (filled land)	27,878	0.64
Total		120,226	2.76

Source: Land survey by Brian Moseley dated 12/10/2010

Note that Parcel No 18-W was originally submerged seabed in Vessup Bay; however, this area was reclaimed (filled) at an unknown date and subsequently improved upon. The subject property also includes a leasehold interest in 3.2 acres of submerged seabed under the dock structures that is owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands.

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018847

Land Description	
Land Area	2.76 acres; 120,226 SF
Source of Land Area	Land survey by Brian Moseley dated 12/10/2010
Primary Street Frontage	Smith Bay Road - 765 feet
Shape	Irregular
Corner	No
Water Frontage	Yes
Topography	Genetly sloping east and towards the water
Drainage	No problems reported or observed
Environmental Hazards	None reported or observed
Ground Stability	No problems reported or observed
Flood Area Panel Number	7800000029G
Date	April 16, 2007
Zone	AE
Description	Within 100-year floodplain
Insurance Required?	Yes
Zoning; Other Regulations	
Zoning Jurisdiction	U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Zoning Designation	W-1
Description	Waterfront - Pleasure
Legally Conforming?	Appears to be legally nonconforming
Zoning Change Likely?	No
Permitted Uses	Variety of commercial uses, oriented towards water recreation and hospitality uses
Minimum Lot Area	10,000 s.f.
Minimum Street Frontage (Feet)	None
Minimum Lot Width (Feet)	100'
Minimum Front Setback (Feet)	25'
Minimum Side Yard (Feet)	10'
Maximum Building Height	3 stories
Maximum Site Coverage	0.4
Maximum Density	Maximum of 2 dwelling units per lot or 8.35 dwelling units per acre
Rent Control	No
Other Land Use Regulations	None that we are aware
Utilities	
Service	Provider
Water	Reverse Osmosis/WAPA available
Sewer	WAPA
Electricity	WAPA
Natural Gas	N/A
Local Phone	Various providers

It appears based the land survey provided that a portion of the building improvements does not meet the setback requirements by zoning and that the subject is a legal, nonconforming use. However, we

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018848

are not experts in the interpretation of zoning ordinances. An appropriately qualified land use attorney should be engaged if a determination of compliance with zoning is required.

The subject is located within a 100-year floodplain related to coastal flooding, which would require additional insurance at the expense of the owner.

The subject site has 765 linear feet of frontage along Smith Bay Road. In addition, the subject has 846 linear feet of water frontage along Vessup Bay. There is no beach along the waterfront portion; with the coastline being that of existing and former mangroves. It is assumed that dredging occurred at some point in time which enabled dockage in close proximity to the water line.

Easements, Encroachments and Restrictions

Based upon a review of the deed and property survey, there do not appear to be any easements, encroachments, or restrictions that would adversely affect value. According to the property survey provided, the subject parking garage encroaches the neighboring parcel to the north in two separate areas: an 82 square foot area encroaches onto Parcel 18N-1-A A, and a 105 square foot area encroaches onto Parcel 18B-2 A. These areas are small in size and the parcels being encroached upon are uneconomic remnants of land owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands. As a result, these encroachments do not have an adverse effect on the overall value of the subject. Our valuation assumes no adverse impacts from easements, encroachments, or restrictions, and further assumes that the subject has clear and marketable title.

Conclusion of Land Analysis

Overall, the physical characteristics of the site and the availability of utilities result in functional utility suitable for a variety of uses including those permitted by zoning. The subject's location along Smith Bay Road in the heart of Red Hook, along with its extensive water frontage on Vessup Bay, are major drivers of demand and value for marina and commercial use on the site. We are not aware of any other particular restrictions on development.

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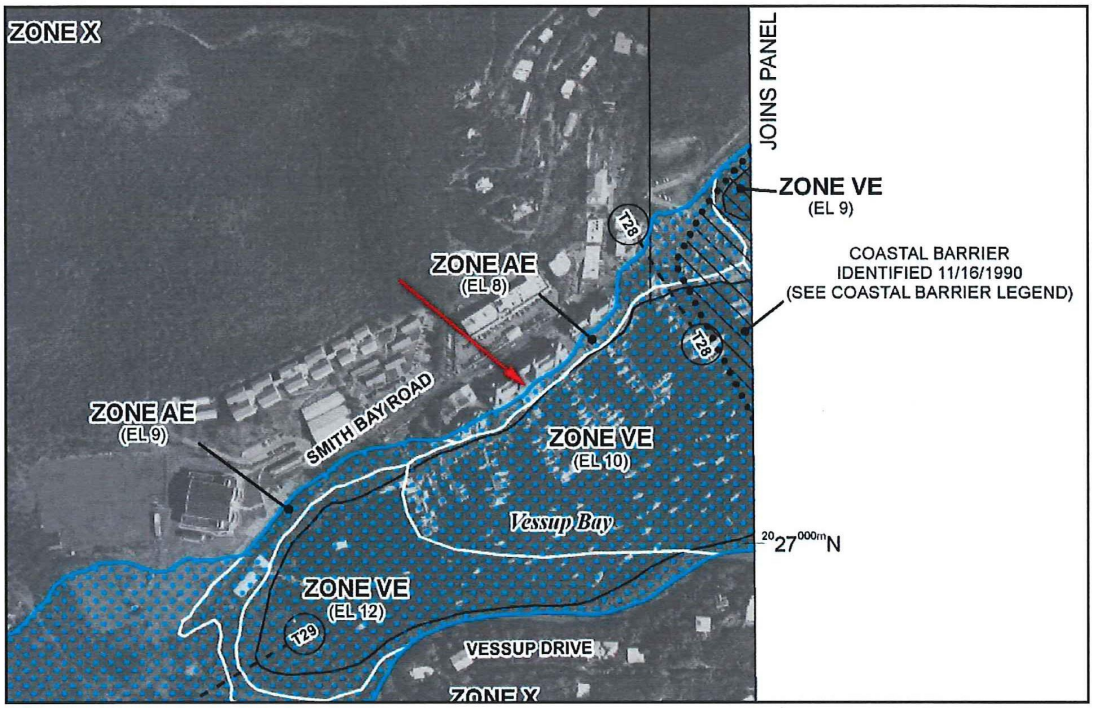
Cadastral Map

Note that the area outlined in yellow above only includes the (upland) land area of the subject property and not seabed beneath the marina.

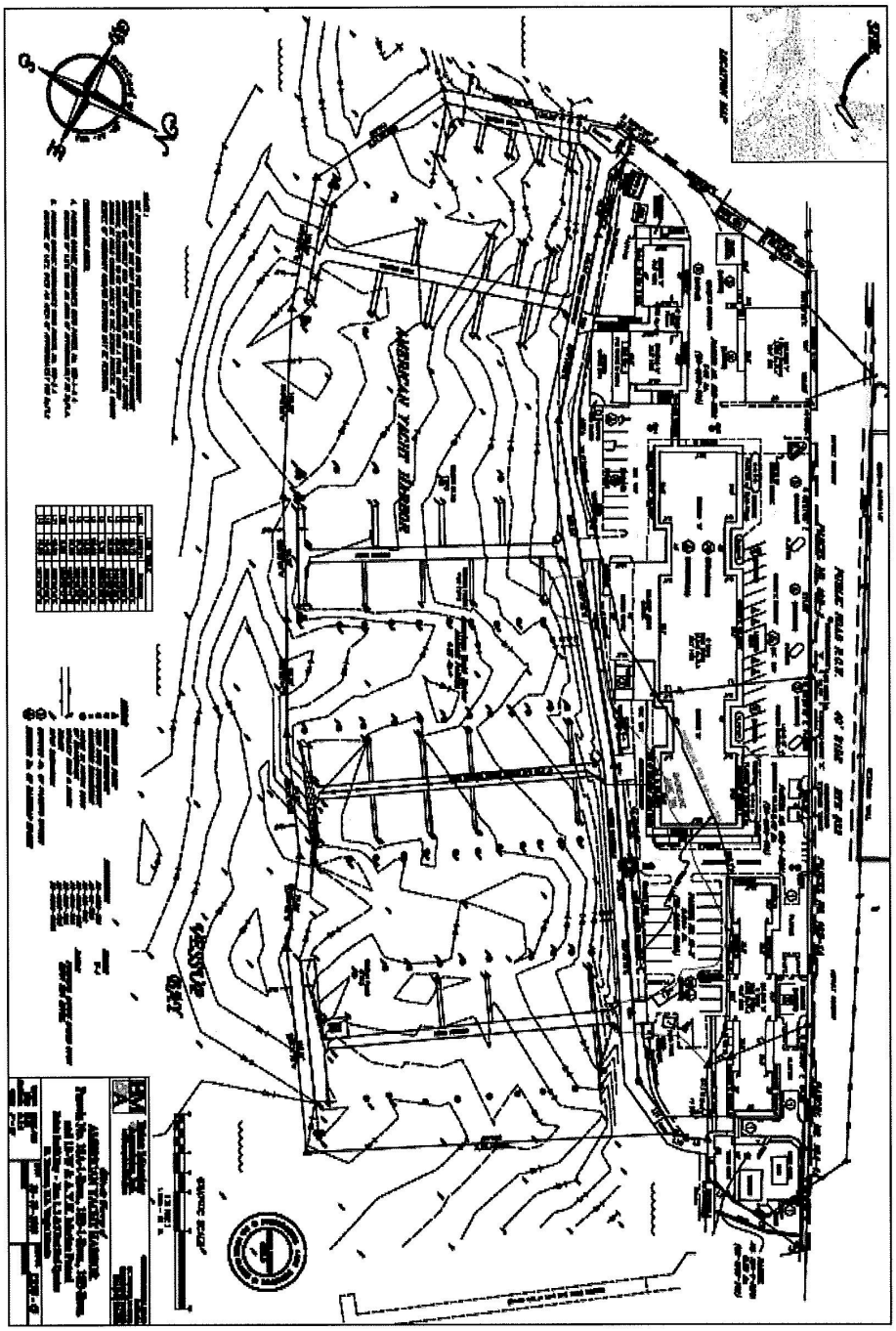
HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018850

Flood Map



HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018851

Site Plan



HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018852

Improvements Description and Analysis

The subject is an existing 250-slip marina with 5 commercial buildings containing a mixture of retail and office space types. The buildings contain 48,661 square feet of rentable area and were constructed in multiple stages; with the majority of the construction completed in 1993. The commercial space is 85% leased as of the effective appraisal date. The marina docks were constructed in multiple phases between 1991-1995 and are 52.8% occupied as of the effective appraisal date. The total site area is 2.76 acres or 120,226 square feet, which includes 0.64 acre or 27,878 square feet, that is re-claimed land. The property also includes 3.2 acres of seabed under the marina dock structures which is leased to the property owner from the Government of the Virgin Islands.

Improvements Description	
Name of Property	IGY American Yacht Harbor Marina
General Property Type	Mixed Use
Property Sub Type	Marina
Competitive Property Class	B
Occupancy Type	Multi-Tenant
Percent Leased	85%
Number of Tenants	36
Tenant Size Range (SF)	292 - 6,000
Number of Buildings	5
Stories	3
Construction Class	A
Construction Type	Steel frame
Construction Quality	Good
Condition	Good
Units per Acre (Density)	38.0
Gross Building Area (SF)	72,808
Rentable Area (SF)	48,652
Land Area (SF)	120,226
Floor Area Ratio (RA/Land SF)	0.40
Floor Area Ratio (GBA/Land SF)	0.61
Building Area Source	Rent roll and land survey by Brian Moseley dated 12/10/2010
Year Built	1992
Year Renovated	N/A
Actual Age (Yrs.)	23
Estimated Effective Age (Yrs.)	15
Estimated Economic Life (Yrs.)	55
Remaining Economic Life (Yrs.)	40
Number of Parking Spaces	167
Source of Parking Count	Inspection
Parking Type	89 surface; 78 covered, underground
Parking Spaces/1,000 SF RA	3.43

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018853

Construction Details	
Foundation	Reinforced concrete footings
Structural Frame	Steel frame
Corridor	Exterior breezeways
Exterior Walls	Painted mansory on the lower levels, wood-siding on the upper levels
Windows	Fixed commercial glass with wooden hurricane shutters
Roof	Pitched with standing seam metal roof
Interior Finishes	The subject property contains a total GBA of 72,808 and a rentable area of 48,652. The large difference in area totals is due to a siginificant amount of exterior common areas as well as a 1,406 SF management office. The improvements are contained within five total buildings varying from one story to three stories. Each building contains a mixutre of retail and office space, with the retail spaces generally on the ground levels and the office spaces generally on the upper levels. The interior upfits of the spaces vary in use, quality and condition but generally are considered to be of good quality and condition. Based on the rent roll there are a total of 39 rentable spaces of which 10 are upfit as bar/restaurants (3 which share a kitchen), 17 are considered general retail spaces, 11 are considered general office spaces and one is considered a storage space.
Floors	Combination of carpet, ceramic or porcelain tile, hardwood, and exposed brick.
Walls	Combination of rendered and painted masonry and painted sheetrock.
Ceilings	Combination of suspended grid accoustic panels, painted sheetrock, and tongue and groove or bead board.
Lighting	Combination of incandescent and fluorescent lighting with fixtures ranging from average to good quality.
Electrical	Assumed typical installation to code
Plumbing	Assumed typical installation to code
Heating	None
Air Conditioning	Central
Utility Meters - Tenants	Individually metered for water and electricity
Elevators	One
Rest Rooms	Common area bathroom are adequate. There are four full bathrooms of good quality that are available to tenants of the marina.
Sprinklers	None
Other Fire Safety	Steel structural beams are fire coated with concrete
Security	The subject is gated along the waterfront and interior/exterior security cameras are installed throughout the property.
Site Improvements	
Landscaping	Average
No. of Customer Parking Spaces	167
Gates/Fencing	Over 6' aluminum gate along the subject's waterfrontage
Paving	Combination of concrete and brick pavers

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018854

Improvements Analysis – Building Improvements

Quality and Condition

The quality and condition of the subject is considered to be superior to that of competing properties. The interior and exterior building improvements are considered to be of good quality and in good condition based on our inspection.

Functional Utility

The improvements appear to be adequately suited to their current use, and there do not appear to be any significant items of functional obsolescence.

Deferred Maintenance

A few items of deferred maintenance were identified during our inspection and based on discussions with management. These include repairs and replacement to the parking garage ceiling, replacing the wooden deck on the upper level Building A, and re-facing various portions of the marina jettys. Note that a detailed description of the marina improvements will be discussed in the following section of this report. To estimate the cost to cure deferred maintenance, we rely on construction estimates from management as shown below.

Deferred Maintenance

Item	Estimated Cost
Parking garage ceiling	$40,000
Wooden deck repair/replacement	$25,000
Marina decking and fendering repair/replace	$96,000
Total	$161,000

*Values expressed in United States Dollars

Planned Capital Expenditures

From 2013 to 2015, a total of $771,460.93 has been spent on various capital expenditures. The major improvements over the past three years were $84,088 for exterior column replacement, $62,172 for security cameras, $62,013 for marina bathrooms, and $281,950 for hand rail replacement. Upcoming expenditures for various capital items considered to be necessary are identified in the following table. To estimate the amounts of these expenditures, we rely on discussions with management. Estimated capital expenditures are as follows.

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018855

Capital Expenditures	
Item	Year 1
Transformer	$10,000
Exterior stairwell repairs	$30,000
Total	$40,000
Percent Applied	100%
Net Total	$40,000

*Values expressed in United States Dollars

ADA Compliance

Based on our inspection and information provided, we are not aware of any ADA issues. However, we are not expert in ADA matters, and further study by an appropriately qualified professional would be recommended to assess ADA compliance.

Hazardous Substances

An environmental assessment report was not provided for review and environmental issues are beyond our scope of expertise. No hazardous substances were observed during our inspection of the improvements; however, we are not qualified to detect such substances. There are three 10,000 gallon diesel storage tanks and one 10,000 gallon gasoline storage tank located unground at the subject site. In addition, there is a marine fueling dock located on the marina. We have assumed there is no environment damage to the subject property as the result of these fuel stations and unless otherwise stated, we assume no hazardous conditions exist on or near the subject.

Personal Property

No personal property items were observed that would have any material contribution to market value.

Conclusion of Improvements Analysis

In comparison to other competitive properties in the region, the subject improvements are rated as follows:

Improvements Ratings	
Visibility/Exposure	Above Average
Design and Appearance	Above Average
Age/Condition	Above Average
Adaptability of Space to other Retail Users	Above Average
Bathrooms	Average
Parking Ratios	Below Average
Distance of Parking to Building Access	Average
Landscaping	Average

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018856

Overall, the quality, condition, and functional utility of the improvements are above average for their age and location. The subject benefits from good access and visibility from both the waterfront and the main thoroughfare of Smith Bay Road. In addition, the overall quality and condition of the subject is above average for this market. Due to the small site size and large number of commercial tenants, there is insufficient parking at the subject based on market standards.

Improvement Analysis – Marina

The marina currently contains 105 wet slips, although that number can vary somewhat depending on the size (width) of the occupying vessels. Each designated slip is supplied with its own electrical outlet and fresh water supply, as well as access to a refueling line. The individual slip sizes can vary based on boater needs, but they can accommodate a variety of vessels, typically within the range from 30 to 79 linear feet for the standard slips, and 79 to 110 linear feet for the T-head slips. In addition, some slips have an attached finger for easier access, which is considered more desirable.

Generally the jetties and slips are constructed of PVC pilings bored and filled with concrete and steel; and wood plank surfacing. Many of the smaller slips are horizontally separated by wooden columns used to tie up vessels rather than there being jetties between each slip.

The physical docks were constructed over several years, from 1991-1995, and are considered to be in average condition. Ongoing renovations have been made to the docks throughout the years, with upcoming expenditures included a complete resurfacing as well as re-facing the wooden skirts on most concrete pilings. The docks consist of mostly concrete pilings and cross braces with some wood, along with wooden skirts and wood decking surface. There have been no major renovations to slip structure within the past five years.

The subject marina benefits greatly from its location in Vessup Bay, which is well protected and positioned in a convenient area at the heart of Red Hook. In addition, this bay has a direct route to St. John and the British Virgin Islands and has a depth that will accommodate vessels with a maximum draft of 10 feet and a maximum vessel length of 110 feet. The subject is one of the closest commercial marinas to both St. John and the BVI, and this convenient location is a major demand generator for commercial charters as well as vessels based in St. John and the BVI which are often in need of a fueling station. The quality and condition of the docks is considered to be average; however, the services and amenities offered at this marina are considered to be above average.

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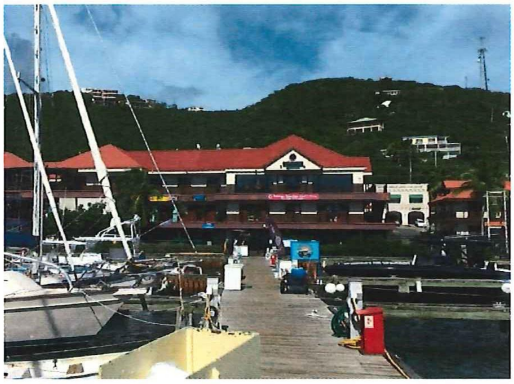
Front exterior of commercial building
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

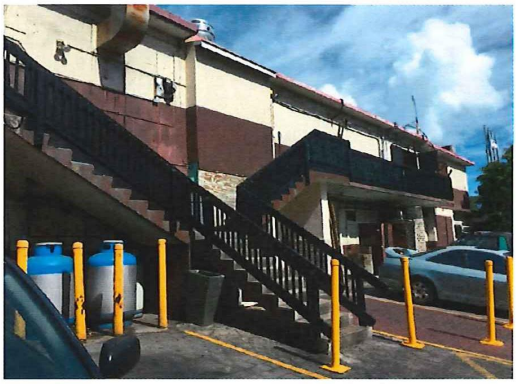
Front and side exterior of commercial building
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

Side exterior of commercial building
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

Rear and side exterior of commercial building
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)



Rear exterior of commercial building from marina dock
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)



Rear exterior of commercial building
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

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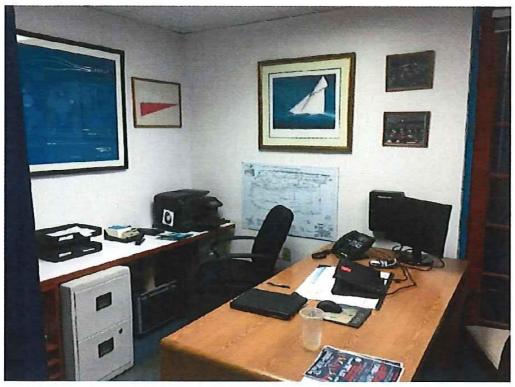
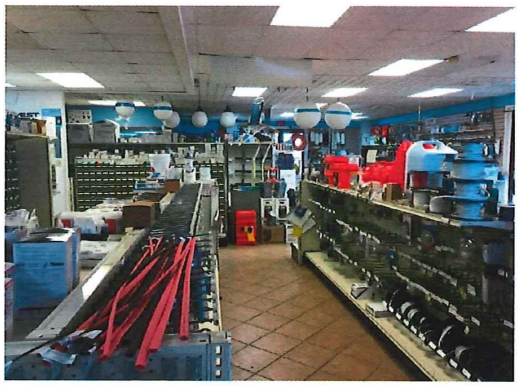


Interior of management office
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

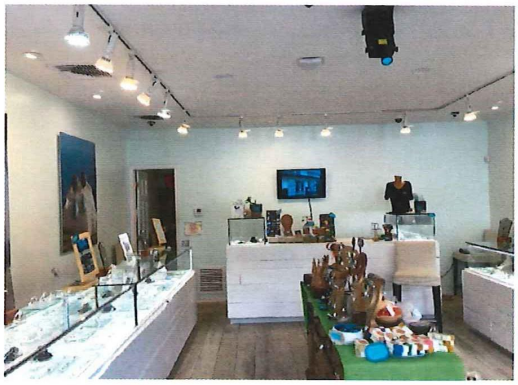
Bathrooms for marina tenants
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

Interior of restaurant space
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)



Interior of general retail space
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

Interior of general retail space
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)



Interior of general retail space
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

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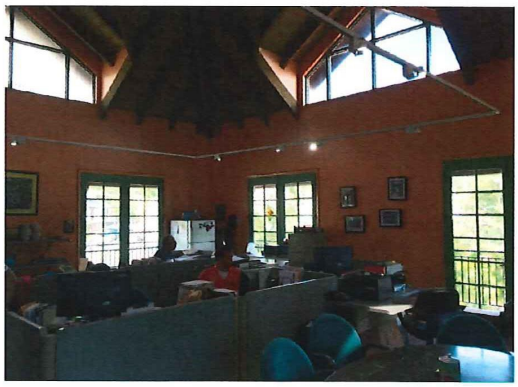
Interior of restaurant space
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

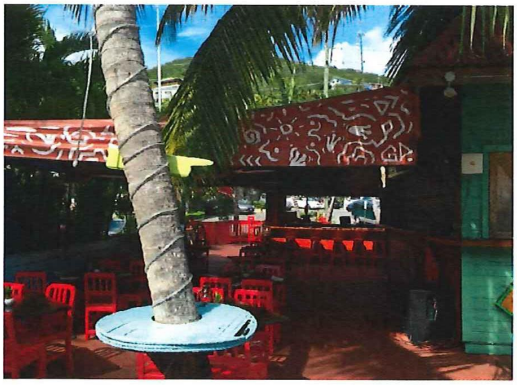
Interior of restaurant space
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

Interior of vacant office space
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)



Interior of occupied office space
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

Interior of restaurant space
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

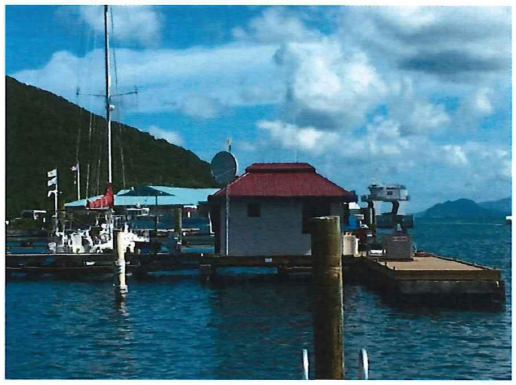


Interior of restaurant space
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018860

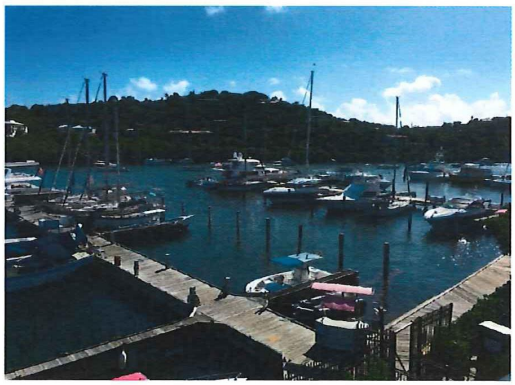
Typical marina dock
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

Marina dock looking back to main commercial building
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)



Fuel dock
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

Close-up of dock surface
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)



Overview of marina dock
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

Street view of Smith Bay Road looking northeast
(Photo Taken on November 25, 2015)

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Prosecutor's home torched after cameras disabled Page 2

Boards of Elections delay in counting votes violates V.I. Code Page 2

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2012 82nd year, No. 22542

CHARGES: ILLEGAL PROCEEDS TOTAL $1.1 MILLION

Senator indicted

Alvin Williams Jr. and two Senate staffers arrested in federal fraud and bribery case

Page 3

Sen. Alvin Williams Jr., who surrendered to law enforcement officials Thursday, did not run for re-election this year. He is in his third term in the V.I. Legislature.

Daily News File Photo

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Scotiabank

Prosecutor's home destroyed in suspected arson on St. Croix

By LOU MATTEI
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — V.I. Police and V.I. Fire Service officials on St. Croix are investigating what they say is suspected arson at the home of a criminal prosecutor for the V.I. Attorney General's Office.

The Estate St. George home of Assistant Attorney General Kip Roberson was fully engulfed in flames when five Fire Service trucks responded to a 911 call about 11 a.m. Thursday, according to St. Croix Fire Chief Angel Torres Sr. and Attorney General Vincent Frazer.

Torres estimated that the home had been burning for about 15 minutes before the call came in. He said firefighters had to force their way through a motorized gate to gain access to the burning house. No one was inside, and no one was hurt in the blaze, but the home was completely destroyed, Torres said.

"It's a total loss," Torres said.

Torres said firefighters also found that surveillance cameras at the home had been tampered with.,

"Someone cut the wires," he said. "The wires was pulled out and the screens were pulled out and thrown in the bushes."

Torres said firefighters found evidence of tampering on the doors to the home, which appeared that someone had tried to pry the doors open. The Fire Service did not leave the scene until 3:20 p.m., Torres said.

Torres said Thursday evening that the Fire Service had not contacted any witnesses at that point and that Roberson's home was located in an isolated area. He said he believed Roberson shared the home with another attorney, but he did not know the attorney's name.

"Apparently they were a couple, but it's an ongoing investigation," Torres said. "We gotta really follow up on some leads and stuff we're looking at."

Roberson could not be reached for comment Thursday evening.

Frazer declined to comment about Roberson's living situation. The attorney general said late Thursday that he had not yet been fully briefed on the fire, but he had a deputy on St. Croix looking into the question of whether the suspected arson could be connected to any cases Roberson was working.

"I hope not, but we will look into that," Frazer said.

Torres said the fire remains under investigation by the Police Department's forensics unit and the Fire Service's arson prevention unit. Anyone with information about the fire can call the Fire Service at **773-8050** and ask for the arson prevention unit.

Elections boards' slow vote count violates V.I. law

By LOU MATTEI
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Both Boards of Elections in the Virgin Islands have run afoul of the V.I. Code and board policies in the wake of Tuesday's general election, from which paper ballots are still being tallied.

The V.I. Code requires the boards to count the votes for each candidate within a day of receiving ballot materials from the polling places: "Each board of elections, after having received all statements, books, lists, papers, vouchers, ballots, ballot boxes and district register from each polling district and polling place in its district, shall convene not later than one day following the receipt thereof and determine the total number of votes cast in the election district for each candidate."

The law states that the boards must convene no later than three days after receiving the aforementioned materials to tally votes for the Board of Education and Board of Elections races.

On Tuesday, a majority of the votes from all races were cast on electronic machines, and results from those ballots were available within hours of the polls closing.

However, widespread distrust of the machines led to a spike in the use of paper ballots — more than 4,500
vote count and, in effect, hampered the boards' abilities to comply with the law.

Today marks the third day since the boards received all the ballots from the polling sites Tuesday night.

The St. Thomas-St. John Board hopes to finish counting the Senate races by the end of the day today before moving on to other races, according to board member Lorna Thomas.

The St. Croix Board is scheduled to begin counting its 2,781 paper ballots today.

Thomas, who helped on Thursday to oversee her board's tally of about 600 ballots in the Senate race, said the law makes little sense in the context of the territory's current paper ballots, which can be counted only by hand.

Daily News Photo by FIONA STOKES

St. Croix Board of Elections member Lisa Harris Moorhead looks on as board members and election judges sort and count ballots Thursday. The board issued a statement Thursday that it had finished sorting more than 2,700 ballots and will begin counting them today at the Election System Office in Sunny Isle Shopping Center.

"Literally it would have been impossible to follow," Thomas said when asked about the law. "I don't see how we could have done that."

Thomas said the board should have new voting machines by the 2014 elections that can tally paper ballots automatically.

When asked about enforcing the section of the law cited above, V.I. Attorney General Vincent Frazer said he "would have to look at that and see."

The boards' handling of the paper ballots also has brought them into conflict with a Board of Elections policy.

Joint Board of Elections Chairman Rupert Ross Jr. said Thursday that the joint board passed a policy earlier this year requiring the boards to begin counting any paper ballots the night of the election. He said the policy never was put into writing, but it may exist in some form in minutes from the meeting. He also said the policy lacked an enforcement mechanism.

Ross said the intent of the policy, which passed by a 6-5 vote, was to ensure that processing of the paper ballots began as soon as possible. The sooner the counting begins, the easier it is to comply with another section of the law that requires the boards to certify a final vote count within 10 days of an election, Ross reasoned.

The certification deadline already was weighing on the mind of Thomas, who pointed out the St. Thomas-St. John Board has yet to touch locked ballot boxes containing absentee ballots and walk-in votes.

Elections Supervisor John Abramson Jr. has said the district processed 412 walk-in ballots and mailed 331 absentee ballots.

But Thomas was optimistic that the board was gaining momentum after a troubled start.

"Tempers were a little tight yesterday, but everyone's happy today," Thomas said. "The public was much quieter and accommodating today, and we appreciated them allowing the judges to do their jobs."

Candidate Lawrence Olive, who earned 304 paper-ballot votes on Thursday to bump Lisa Williams from ninth place in the Senate race, said he told his supporters to use the paper ballots as a more reliable — and legal — alternative to the electronic machines.

"If the trend continues, I don't see no reason why I will not be in the top seven," Olive said. "It just goes to show you that the paper ballot is the true count."

— Contact reporter Lou Mattei at 714-9124 or email lmattei@dailynews.vi.

Election Update

Senate At-large

Craig Barshinger	11,133
Wilma Marsh-Monsanto	4,930

St. Thomas-St. John District

Clifford Graham	6,840
Shawn-Michael Malone	4,704
Myron Jackson	4,661
Janette Millin Young	4,407
Clarence Payne	3,851
Tregenza Roach	3,793
Donald Cole	3,352
Justin Harrigan Sr.	3,118
Lawrence Olive	3,003
Lisa Williams	2,823
Horace Brooks	2,610
Paul Alexander	2,202
Sean Georges	2,147
Marvin Blyden	2,125
Louis Willis	2,082
Alma Francis-Heyliger	1,911
Kent Bernier Sr.	1,800
Janelle Sarauw	1,750
Stephen Frett	1,436
Cecilia Milliner-Emanuel	1,191
Joseph Gumbs	1,138
Kyza Callwood	949
Shirley Sadler	826
Elvin Fahie Sr.	804
Neville Amey	727
Alan Friedman	642
Carol Berry	624
Omodoso Muhammad	411
Cleone Marrishow	327
Jodi Hodge	304
Josephine Lindquist	290
Andreas Tietje	272
Orial Webb	210
Walter Brown	183
Charlesworth Halstead	125

* Unofficial; as of Thursday.

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Sen. Alvin Williams Jr. charged with bribery, mail fraud and wire fraud

By ALDETH LEWIN
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Sen. Alvin Williams Jr. was arrested by federal agents Thursday and charged with bribery, mail fraud and wire fraud.

The proceeds of Williams' criminal activities totalled $1.1 million, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

About 4 p.m. Thursday, almost a dozen 10 FBI agents converged on the V.I. Legislature building on St. Thomas, according to several eyewitnesses.

The agents went inside and came out escorting Kim Blackett, who is listed on the Legislature website as Williams' chief of staff. Blackett also was charged in an indictment filed Thursday.

Another staff member also was charged, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office, which did not release the person's name.

Senate President Ronald Russell said he was on St. Croix at the time the agents arrived at the Legislature, but he was informed of the arrest. Russell said he was told that Williams had surrendered to law enforcement officers.

"He turned himself in, that's what I understand," Russell said.

Russell said he had no additional information Thursday.

In October 2011, about 25 federal and local law enforcement officers raided the St. Thomas Senate building and Williams' office.

A federal grand jury handed up an indictment Thursday charging Williams, Blackett and a third person with operating and participating in criminal activities including bribery, wire fraud and mail fraud, U.S. Attorney for the District of the Virgin Islands Ronald Sharpe said in a prepared statement.

The indictment has not yet been posted by the District Court. However, the statement from Sharpe includes a number of details from the charging documents including that Williams is accused of:

- Attempting to bribe Public Works Commissioner Darryl Smalls with $10,000 in cash.
- Accepting bribes from the developers of Raphune Vistas.
- Accepting $35,000 in bribes from the developers of the wind turbines at Tutu Park Mall.
- Soliciting kick-backs from his own staff in exchange for salary raises.
- Committing wire fraud by using public funds to pay for courses and having staff members submit work in his name to obtain an online degree in his name from University of Phoenix.

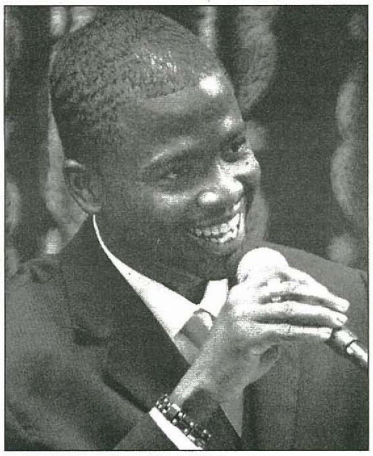
According to Sharpe, if Blackett and Williams are convicted, they face a maximum 20-year prison sentence and up to $250,000 in fines.

Public Works

On Sept. 5, 2009, Williams gave the V.I. Public Works Commissioner $10,000 in cash in an attempt to bribe him to give contracts to Ace Development Inc., a company in which Williams had an interest, Sharpe said.

In his answers to a Daily News candidate questionnaire for the 2006 Voter Guide, Williams said he was the owner of Ace Development Inc.

At the time, Darryl Smalls was the Public Works Commissioner. When The Daily News reached Smalls on Thursday night, he said he had no comment.



Sen. Alvin Williams Jr.

Raphune Vistas

Between Feb. 21, 2007, and Nov. 18, 2011, Williams solicited a bribe from the developers of the Raphune Vista housing development project on St. Thomas, according to the U.S. Attorney's office. The indictment says Williams promoted legislative action and supported the authorization of funding and zoning of the project in exchange for which Ace Development received a contract related to the construction of Raphune Vistas, Sharpe said.

As part of the contract, Ace Development used and/or rented construction equipment to the developers, Sharpe wrote.

In May 2009, the Senate approved a zoning change for Oceanside Village Inc., the developers of Raphune Vistas, from R-1, residential low density one- and two-family, to R-4, residential medium density — against the recommendations of the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources.

In June 2009, Gov. John deJongh Jr. vetoed the zoning change.

Tutu wind turbines

In September 2008, Williams asked for and received a $10,000 campaign contribution from the developers of the Tutu Park windmill project as a bribe to support legislation supporting the project, Sharpe said.

Williams also solicited $25,000 in campaign contributions from the wind turbine developers between September 2008 and September 2009, according to the federal prosecutor.

A number of companies were involved with the wind turbine project, including Green Power Electric; Dallas-based Earth, Wind and Power; and Island Wind Power.

When the Senate passed a comprehensive renewable energy bill in 2009, an amendment was tacked on to change the zoning code to allow wind turbines in B-1 and B-3 business zones without having to seek separate zoning approval. The legislation also would have allowed wholesale renewable energy production in B-4 and B-3 zones.

The measure was line-item vetoed by deJongh in July 2009.

Campaign funds and false reports

From January 2006 to December 2011, Williams and a legislative staff member failed to deposit certain campaign contributions; withdrew funds from a campaign account; and submitted false campaign disclosure reports that failed to include certain contributions, according to Sharpe.

Kick-backs from staff

In the summer of 2010, Williams tried to solicit kick-backs from his own staff in exchange for giving them salary increases, the statement from the U.S. attorney's office said.

According to Sharpe, the staff members were supposed to withdraw a portion of the increased salary in cash and give it to Williams.

From September 2010 to July 2011, Williams received such a bribe, Sharpe said.

University of Phoenix

From April 2007 to February 2008 and from January 2008 to October 2011, Williams and a staff member committed federal wire fraud as the senator sought online degrees from the University of Phoenix.

"The indictment alleges that the staff member falsely submitted various documents that were generated, created and authored by others under the direction of and in the name of Williams," Sharpe said in the statement.

From January 2008 to October 2011, Williams and Blackett defrauded the government by using public funds for non-legislative purposes, namely pursuing an online degree for Williams, Sharpe said.

"As the law enforcement arm of the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Inspector General will aggressively pursue anyone who games the Education system for their own selfish purpose," Special Agent-in-charge of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General Yessyka Santana said in a written statement.

The investigation

The investigation leading to the indictment was conducted by the Public Corruption Task Force, a joint federal and local team.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kim Lindquist, Nolan Paige and Kelly Lake.

"The prosecution of public corruption is a top priority of the U.S. Attorney's Office," Sharpe said. "It is a breach of the public trust for public officials to use their office for personal gain."

"These individuals have allegedly abused their powers by utilizing their positions to discreetly conduct illegal activities," IRS-CI Special Agent-in-charge Jose Gonzalez said Thursday. "IRS-CI is committed to following the money trail to ensure that public officials who use their office to line their own pockets are brought to justice and deprived of their ill-gotten gains."

Sharpe asked anyone with direct knowledge of illegal acts or information on corruption in the Virgin Islands to call the Public Corruption Task Force at **715-6516**.

— Contact reporter Aldeth Lewin at 714-9111 or email alewin@dailynews.vi.

Alvin Williams Jr., 34

Democrat

Senator, St. Thomas-St. John District. 27th, 28th, 29th Legislatures.

Committees: Chairman of Planning and Environment Protection; vice chairman of Government Operations; member of Rules and Judiciary, Housing, Sports and Veterans Affairs, Public Safety, Homeland Security and Justice; liaison to the U.S. Congress.

Education: 1996 graduate of Charlotte Amalie High School.

Claims to have earned an AA online degree from University of Phoenix, but federal indictment puts that in question.

Community positions: Former president of St. Thomas-St. John Horse Owners Association.

Prior employment: Owner of Ace Development Inc. and general manager of Alvin Williams Trucking and Heavy Equipment Rental, which his Legislature website says has been "contracted by the federal and local governments to provide major development services in the territory."

Alvin Williams Jr.'s Senate staff

Kim Blackett, chief of staff.

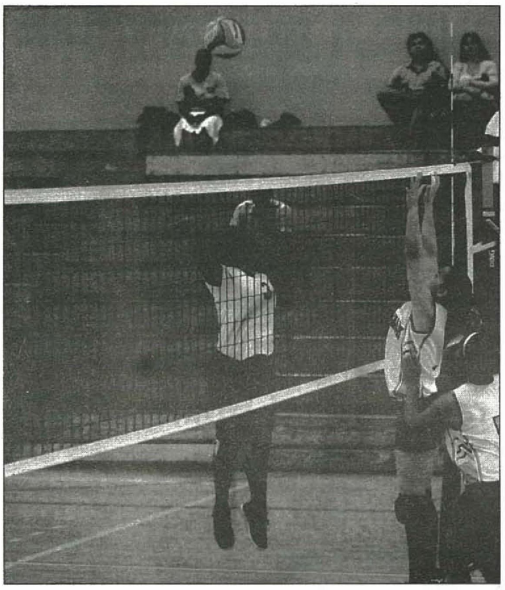
Garry Sprauve, senior advisor.

Rasheen St. Juste, constituent officer.

Phillip Harrigan, public relations officer-committee coordinator.

Jonee' Edwards, administrative assistant, legislative aide.

Sources: V.I. Legislature website, www.legvi.org; Williams' answers to Daily News 2006 Voter Guide questionnaire.



Daily News Photo by TIM CHAPMAN

Ivanna Eudora Kean High School volleyball player Chantell Grant goes up for a kill in the Lady Rays' 3-1 home win over the Ss. Peter & Paul Lady Jaguars on Thursday.

VOLLEYBALL

CONTINUED FROM THE BACK PAGE

the ball over her own head and just inside the out-of-bounds antenna. The ball dropped untouched in the center of the Ss. Peter and Paul half.

The Lady Jags struggled to forget about such points and assistant coach Ronald Blyden noted that emotion is the team's biggest issue. Blyden was filling in for head coach Gigi Quetel, who was unable to attend the game.

"They have their issues and their problems — I understand that — but they feed off of each other negatively, unfortunately," Blyden said. "But they are gifted, that's for sure. That's one of the reasons I'm sticking with them and I don't want to leave."

Kean (7-3) will try to transfer its energy over to St. Croix today and Saturday at the Educational Complex Invitational. Coach Jennifer Matthias hopes to see more consistency out of her team, especially Grant.

"She brings a lot of energy, but sometimes her energy is in her mouth, cheering. But I need more of her energy to go into playing more on the court," Matthias said.

"They love to cheer and make that kind of noise, but I wish they had that energy also when they're playing the ball. They're a good group of girls, but sometimes they get sidetracked."

— Contact reporter Tim Chapman at 714-9102 or tchapman@dailynews.vi.

Boras: Dodgers 'bought store,' Mets 'in freezer'

By RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. — With baseball awash in record revenue as the signing season starts, Scott Boras compares the habits of teams to families sifting through supermarket shelves.

At the winter meetings in Dallas last year, the agent had this to say of the financially troubled Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Mets: "Normally, they're in the steaks section, and I found them in the fruits-and-nuts category a lot."

Since then, the Dodgers have been sold for $2 billion. The Mets owners have agreed to pay up to $162 million — and likely much less — in a deal with the trustee for Bernard Madoff's fraud victims.

So on Wednesday at the general managers' meeting, Boras said his view of the Dodgers had changed.

"I think they bought the store," he said.

And as for the Mets?

"The best you can say is that they might be in the freezer section," he explained. "But there's a lot of good, longstanding products that they can acquire there."

Slugger Josh Hamilton and pitcher Zack Greinke are among the top players in a relatively weak free-agent class that also includes outfielders B.J. Upton, Michael Bourn, Torii Hunter and Nick Swisher; first baseman Adam LaRoche; and pitchers Kyle Lohse and Rafael Soriano.

Baseball estimates revenue this year at $2.5 billion — an increase of about $500 million. National television contracts with Fox and Turner that run from 2014-21 will double the average yearly money baseball receives to about $800 million.

And perhaps the biggest evidence of baseball's wealth is franchise values — the Dodgers sold for $2 billion this year in a bankruptcy court auction and the lowly San Diego Padres were bought for $800 million.

Since the Dodgers were bought last spring by a group headed by Mark Walter, Stan Kasten and Magic Johnson, they increased their payroll by about $35 million, adding infielder Hanley Ramirez, first baseman Adrian Gonzalez, closer Brandon League, pitcher Josh Beckett and outfielder Carl Crawford.

The Dodgers' payroll next year might approach or surpass that of the New York Yankees, who have topped spending every year since Los Angeles edged them by $1 million in 2001.

New York is vowing to cut its payroll by 2014 because of changes in the collective bargaining agreement that will cut the team's revenue-sharing bill if it doesn't wind up paying a luxury tax.

Infielder Maicer Izturis became the first major league free agent to switch teams this offseason, agreeing to a $10 million, three-year contract with the Toronto Blue Jays. The 32-year-old hit .256 with 17 steals in 19 tries, two homers and 20 RBIs this year for the Angels.

FOOTBALL

CONTINUED FROM THE BACK PAGE

against Charlotte Amalie High School in mid-October, but rebounded with a 46-0 win over Central High on St. Croix before last week's bye.

"We have a lot of senior leadership," Neely said, "so really these guys govern themselves — guys like Nathan Braithwaite, our quarterback."

Braithwaite, a senior, has found Cilliers and senior receivers Omar Henderson and Lucas Berry on touchdown passes.

Kean High sophomore quarterback Shunnel Greenaway must exhibit more poise to give his team a chance.

Greenaway looked sharp in the first half of last week's 36-10 loss to CAHS, but the offense sputtered down the stretch.

"I'm trying to keep him to maintain focus and be patient," Donovan said. "When he was patient in the first half of the game, we were moving the ball. Everything doesn't have to be deep. Every pass doesn't have to be a touchdown right away. He's only 16 years old, so sometimes he gets too excited and gets away from the pace of the game."

Greenaway's protection will not come easy. Cilliers had two sacks and recovered a fumble to lead the Arawaks defense in the first meeting.

If the Arawaks win tonight and defeat CAHS (4-0) next week, both teams will have one loss. CAHS is idle the following week, and the Arawaks finish against struggling St. Croix Educational Complex.

In the case of a tie in the final regular season standings, point differential will determine which team qualifies for the territory championship on Dec. 8.

Local Briefs

Basketball clinics

ST. CROIX — The Sports, Parks and Recreation Department will conduct after-school basketball clinics at Rudy Krigger Ballpark in Sion Farm every Wednesday through Dec. 19.

The clinics are geared toward teaching youths the fundamentals of basketball and are for children ages 7 through 12. Free registration is from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Krigger Ballpark. For more information, call Carita Stevens at **773-0160.**

St. Thomas Yacht Club race, fundraiser

ST. THOMAS — The St. Thomas Yacht Club is hosting a race and pig roast on Dec. 15 to benefit the club's youth sailing program.

The $40 entrance fee includes two tickets per boat for the pig roast following the race. Sailors of all ages are welcome, and the race is open to IC-24s, Racers, Cruising boats and any boat 24 feet or longer.

Trophies and gift certificates will be presented to the top three boats. The race will start 8:55 a.m., but skippers will meet at 8 a.m. The event is sponsored by Scotiabank and Budget Marine.

For more information, contact the club at **775-6320**.

Basketball clinic

ST. CROIX — The USVI Department of Sports, Parks and Recreation, the Department of Tourism and the Paradise Jam Organization will host a basketball clinic from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Monday at Central High School's Ronald Charles Gymnasium.

The clinic will be conducted by Nels Hawkinson, the president and executive director of Basketball Travelers Inc., and is for boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 18. BTI organizes the Paradise Jam and other college and high school tournaments around the world. Hawkinson will be joined by colleague Craig Jonas.

Participants will receive Paradise Jam posters and T-shirts and have a chance to win complimentary tickets to the tournament, which begins Nov. 16.

Rugby practice

ST. THOMAS — The USVI Rugby Football Union practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays every week from 6-8 p.m. at Charlotte Amalie High School. Veterans, novices and first-time players are all welcome to participate.

The group is training for upcoming scrimmages with the BVI and other down-island teams. For details, email Dan Perez at usvirugby@gmail.com, visit their web site at www.usvirugby.org or call **941-565-0031**.

After-school junior tennis program

ST. CROIX — Tennis pros Don de Wilde and Kristopher Elien is running an after-school junior tennis program through Christmas at the Buccaneer Hotel for players between the ages of 5 to 18. For more information, or to ask about times, costs or registration, call **718-3036**.

Boat captain arrested in 2011 death of parasailor

By LOU MATTEI
Daily News Staff

ST. THOMAS — Boat captain Kyle Coleman was arrested Wednesday on a charge that he caused the 2011 death of a parasailor through misconduct, negligence and inattention to his duties, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced Thursday.

Coleman, the captain of the motor boat Turtle, was conducting parasailing excursions just south of Water Island on Nov. 15, 2011, according to a press release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Bernice Kraftcheck and her daughter, Danielle Haese, were hoisted into the air for the parasail ride as wind conditions were deteriorating.

"The strong winds and a weak tow-line caused the tow-line to break, resulting in the parasail separating from the vessel and the two women falling into the water," the statement reads. "The wind then propelled the parasail, with the women still attached, at a very high rate of speed causing the death of Kraftcheck and serious injuries to Haese."

The U.S. Coast Guard "aggressively investigated" the accident, which led to Coleman's arrest and the surrender of his merchant mariner's license in June, according to a prepared statement by Capt. Drew Pearson, the Coast Guard's San Juan commander.

"The Coast Guard takes safety at sea very seriously, and will ensure that any mariner who causes another's death through misconduct, negligence, and inattention to his duties is held accountable in a court of law," Pearson said in the release.

A medical examiner pronounced Kraftcheck, 60, of Round Lake, Ill., dead at the West Indian Co. dock the afternoon of the accident. Haese, 34 at the time, of Plymouth Meeting, Pa., was hospitalized overnight at Schneider Hospital.

The women were passengers aboard the Celebrity Eclipse and bought a parasailing shore-excursion operated by Caribbean Watersports and Tours.

The one-count grand jury indictment charging Coleman was not available on the District Court's online court records database as of Thursday night.

Coleman, 32, made his first appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller and was released on a $10,000 unsecured bond, according to the release. He is scheduled to be arraigned in District Court on Nov. 14, one day shy of the one-year anniversary of Kraftcheck's death.

If convicted, Coleman could face up to 10 years in prison and a $250,000 fine.

— Contact reporter Lou Mattei at 714-9124 or email lm

Nelson tells Luis board that hospital is still falling short of standards

By JOY BLACKBURN
Daily News Staff

ST. CROIX — Luis Hospital Chief Executive Jeff Nelson updated board members about the hospital's status with federal regulators during a meeting Thursday night.

Luis remains under the regulatory microscope with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services — and the hospital's certification from the federal agency is potentially at stake.

CMS certification indicates a hospital meets certain standards, and if a hospital is decertified, it is no longer eligible to receive payments from the federal agency for services the hospital provides to Medicare and Medicaid patients.

Revenues from CMS patients represent about 60 percent of the hospital's income, Nelson said Thursday.

The hospital currently is operating under two settlement agreements with CMS, aimed at fixing problems found by inspectors from the federal agency during inspections in recent years.

One of the agreements involves the entire hospital.

Nelson on Thursday said that the hospital recently had received a statement of deficiencies from CMS after inspectors conducted a follow-up, focused survey in September as part of the monitoring on that agreement.

Inspectors had found some improvements, "but not enough," Nelson said Thursday.

The hospital has submitted a plan of correction for the deficiencies, but the federal agency said that the plan was not creative or detailed enough, Nelson told the board.

Hospital officials will work on the plan of correction, and once CMS approves it, the elements of the plan will be part of the overall settlement agreement, Nelson said after the meeting.

Luis has until Feb. 13 to meet the federal agency's mandates for improvement or it potentially will lose CMS certification — although Nelson said the surveys could come sooner.

"We may see CMS here as early as mid-December," Nelson said.

The hospital also is in the process of temporarily shutting down its psychiatric unit for 90 days in an effort to make improvements in that unit, officials said. Luis is working with a hospital in the United States to come to an agreement to temporarily transfer its patients there, officials said.

The plan to temporarily close the unit prompted considerable discussion at the meeting. Some advocates for the mentally ill, as well as some physicians, raised questions about the wisdom of the move.

Board members said it was necessary to make improvements to the unit so that the hospital can keep the unit open in the long-term.

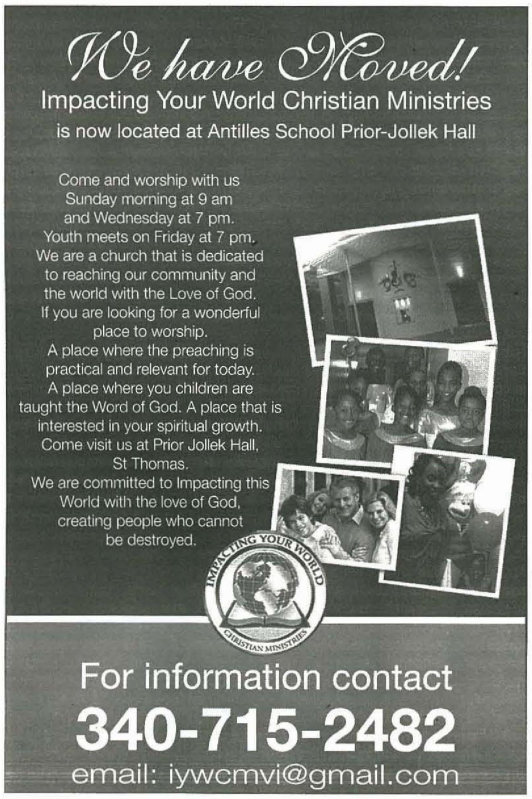
The other settlement agreement Luis Hospital has with CMS is for the dialysis unit.

The hospital has met the federal standards for that unit, but the settlement agreement remains in place because CMS wanted to ensure that the positive changes were sustained, Nelson said.

That settlement agreement has been extended once, and Nelson told board members Thursday that he anticipates it will be extended again for further monitoring, although he did not know for how long.

In other action, the board discussed and approved reports and a variety of recommendations from its Finance Committee. It also approved a policy related to public access to board meeting minutes. Board chairwoman Kye Walker said the document puts the board's current practices into a policy.

— Contact Joy Blackburn at 714-9145 or email jblackburn@dailynews.vi.



V.I. National Park to offer free admission to Trunk Bay

Daily News Staff

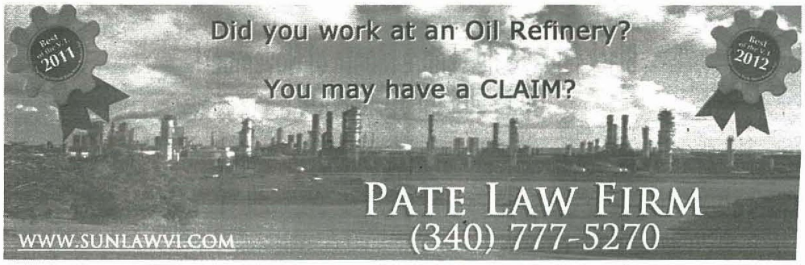
In recognition of Veterans Day, the National Park Service has designated Saturday, Sunday and Monday as a "fee-free weekend."

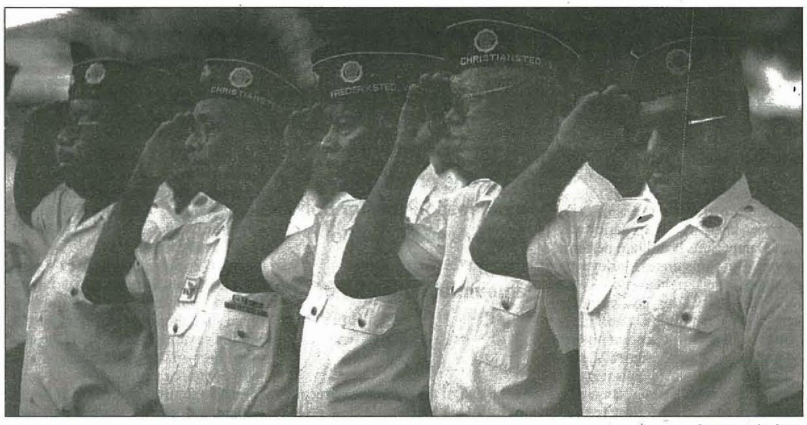
All visitors to National Park sites in the territory, including Trunk Bay on St. John, will be admitted free.

Trunk Bay Beach is one the most-visited beaches on St. John, and is home to an underwater trail, where swimmers are able to snorkel over a reef and read plaques identifying coral and fish below.

To avoid over-crowding of the Trunk Bay parking lot, National Park personnel are encouraging visitors to carpool or take a safari taxi.

For more information, call Andrea Joseph at **776-6201** ext. **249**.





Daily News File Photo

Amrican Legion members salute as the national anthem is played at a Veterans Day program in Frederiksted.

Events honor servicemen and veterans

By ALDETH LEWIN
Daily News Staff

Monday is Veterans Day, but the whole month of November is Military Appreciation Month, and a series of activities are planned to honor and pay tribute to those who fought for our country.

Today, veterans will visit two St. Croix schools to give presentations to students.

Members of American Legion Post 102 will be "teachers for a day" at Ricardo Richards Elementary School. They also will present gifts to the school and administer an essay contest for students.

American Legion Post 133 will be at Arthur Richards Jr. High School talking to students about veterans issues.

"These are things they're doing through the week to celebrate Veterans Day and National Education Week," American Legion District Commander Charles David said.

Parades and programs honoring the territory's veterans will take place Sunday and Monday.

Sunday, St. Thomas will host a Veterans Day Parade and ceremony. The parade starts at 3 p.m. at Addelita Cancryn Junior High School and travels to Franklin Delano Roosevelt Veterans Memorial Park.

Retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Farrell will be the parade marshal, and the ceremony will feature retired Lt. Col. Marilyn Georges of the U.S. Marine Corps as the guest speaker.

On Monday, St. Croix and St. Jolm will host Veterans Day parades and programs.

On St. Croix, the parade starts at 9:30 a.m. sharp at Bassin Triangle and ends at the Christiansted grandstand.

"This year we have as our parade marshal retired Sgt. Major. Monroe F. Clendenden Jr.," David said.

At the bandstand, the guest speaker will be Virdin C. Brown, the civilian aide to the secretary of the Army for the Virgin Islands.

David said many youths will be participating in the parade including the marching bands from Central High School and St. Croix Educational Complex, the Boy Scouts, and the Girl Scouts.

The American Legion will also have a large contingent marching in the parade, he said.

"It should be a good parade, just remembering and thanking the veterans for their service and all they've done helping to keep us free," David said.

On St. John, the parade will start at 3 p.m. in Cruz Bay, followed by a program in Franklin Powell Park.

David said the parade marshal will be Elmo Rabsett Sr., and Georges also will be the guest speaker on St. John.

"We're expecting the governor to make presentations at all of these events," David said.

On Thursday, a tree planting ceremony will take place 5:30 p.m. in Frederiksted at Verne Richards Veterans Park.

"That will more or less close out the week for Veterans," David said.

Gov. John deJongh Jr. granted all government workers administrative leave Monday to participate in the festivities honoring the territory's veterans.

"I urge all residents of the territory to remember the sacrifices and contributions of all those who, when called upon to do so, served this territory and this nation honorably in time of war and peace to preserve our heritage of freedom," deJongh stated in his Veterans Day proclamation.

"We must rededicate ourselves to the task of promoting world peace as the most profound reward which we might bestow upon our veterans."

For more information about Veterans Day activities call David at **712-7766** or the St. Thomas-St. John District Office of Veterans Affairs at **774-6100**.

— Contact reporter Aldeth Lewin at 714-9111 or email alewin@dailynews.vi.

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Police Reports

The police blotter is the V.I. Territorial Emergency Management Agency's list of incidents and the time they were reported to the police.

St. Croix

Charged: Possession of stolen property

Vaskin Jacobs, 23, of Estate Grove Place was arrested 2:53 p.m. Wednesday and charged with possession of stolen property. Police said he was found with parts on his vehicle that had been reported stolen. He was released on $10,000 bail.

• • •

Incidents recorded in the police blotter Thursday included:

Assault — 5:21 p.m. Thursday, La Reine; 6:57 p.m. Thursday, Peter's Rest.

Burglary — 6:48 p.m. Wednesday, Mount Pleasant; 10:20 p.m. Wednesday, Estate Profit; 8:50 a.m. Thursday, Mount Pleasant; 9:36 a.m. Thursday, Work and Rest; 3:14 p.m. Thursday, La Grande Princesse.

Destruction of property — 8:06 a.m. Thursday, Sprat Hall.

Larceny — 10:46 a.m. Thursday, Sunny Isles; 2:04 p.m. Thursday, Castle Coakley.

Outside fire — 9:06 p.m. Wednesday, St. George's; 3:01 p.m. Thursday, South Shore Road.

Structure fire — 9:12 a.m. Thursday, Mount Pleasant; 11:01 a.m. Thursday, St. George's.

St. Thomas

Charged: Burglary

Edward Richards, 30, of St. John, was arrested at 6 p.m. Tuesday and charged with third-degree burglary on Kronprindsens Gade. Bond was set at $55,000.

Charged: Driving under the influence

Lisa Babcock, 39, of Estate Hope, was arrested at 10:15 p.m. Wednesday and charged with driving under the influence and negligent driving. Bond was set at $500.

• • •

Incidents recorded in the police blotter Wednesday and Thursday included:

Assault — 9:53 a.m. Thursday, Contant; 3:16 p.m. Thursday, Bovoni; 3:46 p.m. Thursday, Tutu Hi-Rise.

Burglary — 7:33 p.m. Wednesday, Hull Bay; 8:05 a.m. Thursday, Hull Bay.

Larceny — 8:53 a.m. Thursday, Marina Market; 12:59 p.m. Thursday, Al Cohen Mall.

Structure fire — 2:05 p.m. Thursday, Polyberg Hill.

Vehicle damage — 10:58 a.m. Thursday, Garden Street.

St. John

Incidents recorded in the police blotter Thursday included:

Assault — 1:16 p.m. Thursday, Cruz Bay.

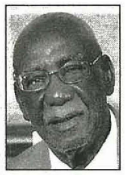
Deaths

♦ Funeral Schedule ♦

Name	Date of death	Service	Arrangements
St. Thomas			
Jennie V. Douglas	Oct. 28, 2012	Pending	Turnbull's
Egbert Evanson	Oct. 29, 2012	Wednesday	Turnbull's
Slyvia Agatha Hyacinth	Oct. 29, 2012	Today	John Thomas
Neville Lee	Oct. 30, 2012	Pending	Turnbull's
Louis V. Murray	Sept. 27, 2012	Pending	John Thomas
Liston L. Powell Jr.	Oct. 22, 2012	Saturday	Turnbull's
Freddy N. Sanchez	Sept. 7, 2012	Pending	John Thomas
Andre Tanise	Sept. 7, 2012	Pending	John Thomas
Charles Smith	Oct. 27, 2012	Pending	Davis
Jemilia Vergara	Oct. 23, 2012	Pending	Turnbull's
Josephine Espirit-Webster	Oct. 29, 2012	Pending	Turnbull's
John Weeks Sr.	Nov. 1, 2012	Nov. 17	Davis
Iva Williams	Oct. 23, 2012	Saturday	Turnbull's
Karimah Williams	Oct. 28, 2012	Today	Davis

John B. Weekes Sr.

On Nov. 1, 2012, John B. Weekes Sr., owner of Weekes & Weekes Bakery, quietly slipped away into the arms of his Lord and Savior at home with close family and friends by his side.


John B. Weekes Sr.

He has left behind a very large family, oceans of friends and the community he loved and gave so generously to. He was best known for his world famous hot and tasty butter bread.

The first viewing will be held Nov. 16, 2012, at Davis Funeral Home Chapel from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., followed by a celebration of his life at Paltns Court Harborview at 7 p.m. The second viewing will be held Nov. 17, 2012, at V.I. Christian Ministries in Bolongo Bay at 8 a.m., followed by the service at 10 a.m.

The burial will be private.

He was preceded in death by his children, Arthur "Kiyama" Lewis and Jacqueline Weekes Ivory.

He is survived by his wife, Audrey M. Weekes; children, Elmon Weekes, Paulette Weekes Trocard, Debra Weekes Allen, Charmine Weekes, Jacinth Weekes Gray, Eloise Weekes Lewis, Bernice Weekes Anthony, Felix Weekes, Andy Weekes, Wendy Weekes Carbon, Deter Weekes, Cindy Weekes Kydd, Marsha Weekes Williams, Eustace Weekes, John Weekes Jr., Shenelle Weekes, Chantel Weekes, Tanya Weekes, Actavia Weekes, Johanna Weekes; grandchildren, Aswad Weekes, Zowadie Weekes, Nayaka Weekes, Ricardo Allen, Renaldo Allen, Renee Allen, Marcia Weekes Garcia, Noel Gray Jr., Natalie Gray, Orencia Herbert, Ethelyn Newton, Dawn Charlemagne, Ezekiel Wattley, Rochelle Mack, Akiel Mack, Toushika Anthony, Chefton Newton, Sharima Newton, Marissa Newton, D'andre Weekes, Brianna Kydd, Brinya Kydd, Zion Weekes, Britney Weekes, Shekinah Weekes, Hezekiah Weekes, Kymoi Weekes, Jude Weekes, D'mari Weekes Hunte, Karisma Weekes, Noris Wilkins, Terrance Leonard, Samarie George; brothers, Everton Meade, Aldrick Meade, George Meade, Julian Meade, Arthur Meade, the Edward Jackson Meade family out of English Habour, Antigua; sons-in-law, Andrew Williams, Eustace Trocard, Brian Kydd, James Carbon, Omir Lewis; special friend, Marcola Carlo; and caretakers, Mary Carpio and Nelia Mesca.

Arrangements are by Davis Funeral Home.

— Obituary written by the family.

Paula Gonzalez Martinez

Paula Gonzalez Martinez, 87, formerly of St. Thomas, died in Loganville, Ga., on Oct. 28, 2012.

Services will be held at 11 a.m Saturday at Nuestra Senora del Carmen Catholic Church in Culebra, Puerto Rico. The family will receive friends and relatives at the church at 10:30 a.m. Services will be held later, and burial will follow at Culebra Municipal Cemetery. A memorial service will be held on St. Thomas at a later date.

Paula Gonzalez Martinez

She was preceded in death by her husband of 58 years, Hermenegildo "Gildo" Martinez. In 1944, they opened their first grocery store on Kronprindsens Gade, St. Thomas, where they served the people of the area for 12 years.

In 1956. they moved to Contant 7B-15 where they operated Martinez Self-Service until 1980 when they retired and moved to their birthplace of Culebra, where they lived until Gildo passed away in 2005. Paula relocated to Atlanta, Ga., where she lived with her daughter Sonia M. Greaux and son-in-law, Roland H. Greaux, until her passing.

She is survived by her sister, Virginia Gonzalez; children, Sonia M. Greaux, Luz A. Moron, Paula M. Buice and Gildo A. Martinez; sons-in law, Roland H. Greaux, Robert G. Moron and David C. Buice; daughter-in-law, Constance D. Martinez; grandchildren, Ashlee Martinez, Roland H. Greaux II and his wife, Amber Greaux, Melissa Greaux White, Robert G. Moron II and wife, Noelle Moron, Christopher G. Moron, Andrea Buice Crockett and husband, John H. Crockett; great-grandchildren, Dylan H. White, Brayden H. White and Deven J. Moron; special sisters-in- law, Amelia Barbosa and Ramonita Romero-Gonzalez; special nieces, Noemi Gonzalez, Myrta G. Benet and Diana Gonzalez; nephew, Beno Gonzalez.

She is also survived by the Barbosa, Gonzalez and Carrillo families of St. Thomas, the Gonzalez family of Culebra, and many other relatives and friends.

In lieu of flowers, and in her memory, donations can be made to Clear Blue Sky, Inc., P.O. Box 778, St. Thomas, V.I. 00804, phone 340-774-9688. Clear Blue Sky, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that helps people with mental illness reach their full potential.

Arrangements are by the Tim Stewart Funeral Home in Loganville, Ga., and Carrasco Funeral Home in Fajardo, Puerto Rico.

— Obituary written by the family.

Iva Williams

Services will be held Saturday for Iva Williams, who died Oct. 23, 2012.

The viewing is from 5 to 7 p.m. today at Turnbull's Funeral Home, with the service at 10 a.m. Saturday at All Saints Church.

Iva Williams

The burial will be at Western Cemetery No. 1.

She is survived by a daughter, Merle Hodge-Caines; sisters, Iris Larcheveaux Adams, Beulah Larcheveaux Wilson, Eldra Larcheveaux, Eleanor Larcheveaux Tyson; brothers, Luther Davis, Lionel Larcheveaux; sister-in-law, Mary Malone; brother-in-law, Romeo Malone; grandsons, Raymond (Malo) George, Reynaldo (Yambo) St. George, Ivan Smith, Douglas (Dougie) Smith, Mark D. Hodge, Matthew D. Hodge; granddaughters, Marilyn (Bambi) George, Joanne Smith, Charmaine Caines, Pamela Browne-Hodge, Cheryl Dawson-Robles, Nynier Hodge-Johnson, Amy Hodge; great-grandchildren, Ymassie George, Kambo George, Yambo George, Cheneva George, Travis George, Promise George, Pain George, Zia George, Joy George, Raheem George, Kareem George, ShinaeMica George, Takea George, K'Shambo George, Rambo George, Tikisha George, Kwanza George, Kimisa George, Andre George, Angela St. George, Rama St. George, Kaloma Smith, Tau Smith, Tacuma Smith, Machida Smith, Zachea Smith, Shantel Smith, Marianne Smith, Kera Smith, Patrick Daniel, Damal Smith, K'Shawn Robles, Chequida Robles, Chereda Robles, Pamesha Perez, Richard (Rakeel) Hodge, Rakiesha Hodge; great-great-grandchildren, Ymassie George Jr., Kmani George, Torriar George, Travis George Jr., Allyanna George, Amir George, Knica George, Seshaun George, Jodiya Williams, Ashae Williams, Jeremy Williams, Millian Brown, Derrick Banks Jr. David Lugar Jr, Davion Dorsett; nieces, Lera Richards, Lela Holder, Lita Adams, Lois, Cheryl Duran, Andrea Duran, Marisa Duran, Parrish Warren, Kamona Warren-Cham, Rita Robles, Andrea Larcheveaux, Amelia Larcheveaux, Tesha Larcheveaux, Deborah Larcheveaux, Sherryl Larcheveaux, Emily Larcheveaux, Christie Larcheveaux; nephews, Leroy Adams, Allen Estiridge, Alva Estridge, Vern Parson, Christopher Davis, Michael Davis, Bruce Duran, Michael Duran, Kevin Duran, Bryan Duran; close cousins, Gloria Lenard and Janet; caretaker, Felicia A. Brownlow; and god-daughter, Yveonne Warker.

She was preceded in death by a son, Conrad Lorenzo Hodge; sisters, Rita Larcheveaux Santos, Louise Larcheveaux Ali; brother, Archibald Larcheveaux; nieces, Rosalind Tarver, Michelle Duran; and nephew, Keith Duran.

Arrangements are by Turnbull's Funeral Home.

Happy days, even with the cliff

Gail Collins

La Di Dah Di Dah ...

We have been through a lot, people. But now the presidential race is settled. Barack Obama won. People on both sides worked heroically, and, on Tuesday, their candidates behaved well. This should be a happy time.

Oh, my God! There's a fiscal cliff! We're all going to fall over and go bankrupt!

Did you just hear the cheerful rule? The fiscal cliff doesn't happen until the end of the year when the Bush tax cuts expire and monster budget cuts automatically kick in. Now that the election's over, everybody will certainly be ready to move forward and work something out.

Except possibly Gov. Rick Perry, who celebrated the president's re-election by demanding the repeal of Obamacare.

And then there was Donald Trump, who tweeted during the vote count: "Lets fight like hell and stop this great and disgusting injustice! The world is laughing at us."

Actually Trump has no conceivable impact on anything. I just wanted to take this opportunity to reminisce about the time he sent me an irate, handwritten message in which he misspelled the word "too."

But look at Rep. John Boehner. On Wednesday, the House speaker gave a speech in which he vowed to be cooperative.

"Mister President, this is your moment. We're ready to be led," he said.

xcept for a few no-go areas, such as any ta increases on "small business." You may remember from previous crises that the House Republicans oppose raising income ta es on the wealthy because it would impact struggling small businesses such as a hedge fund manager with an eight-figure annual income.

Boebner also raised a whole new specter of political peril: "going over part of the fiscal cliff." That sounded less dire, as long as we all stay inside our dangling cars and refrain from making any moves until help arrives.

But, by the end, it sounded as if the only cliff-avoidance Boehner was really interested in was one that raised new revenue through "fewer loopholes, and lower rates for all."

We have already seen that plan. It was proposed by a man who, on Tuesday, lost the state in which he was born, the state in which he was governor and the three states in which he owns houses. Thanks to a blog by Eric Ostermeier in Smart Politics, I am able to point out that the only candidate for president who lost his home state by a larger margin than Mitt Romney was John Fremont in 1856. And Fremont was coming out of a campaign in which the opposition accused him of being a cannibal.

While Boehner was explaining the importance of not going halfway over a cliff, or raising income taxes on the rich he looked somber and somewhat unhappy. This may have been because his Republican colleagues just lost the White House and the Senate. Or perhaps, it was simply because he's an older white guy, and, therefore, part of the biggest loser demographic of the election, the flip-side of the insurgent Latino vote.

On election night, people were talking about the not-young male population as if they were a dwindling tribe of graybeards sitting around a sputtering stove in Oklahoma. Republican strategist John Weaver worried about becoming "a shrinking regional party of middle-aged and older white men." On Fox News, Bill O'Reilly moaned that "the white establishment is now the minority."

O'Reilly, 63, added that the new majority was composed of people who "want stuff." As opposed to older white men, all of whom have signed a pledge never to accept veteran benefits, Social Security or Medicare.

"It's not a traditional America anymore," O'Reilly sadly concluded.

Almost everybody thinks of the world of their youth as the traditional world. In the future, today's teenagers will be looking back and mournfully declaring that traditional America was a place where folks really knew how to Twitter. Still, it's unseemly to identify the true America as the one where your group ran everything.

Cheer up, white men! You seem to be doing OK. Next year women will have 20 percent of the seats in the U.S. Senate, and we're celebrating.

And since it looks as if we're not getting any downtime, we'll have to get cracking on this latest congressional crisis. Root for a bipartisan solution that does not involve the White House's being hijacked by a guy who keeps babbling about going halfway over a cliff.

In the past, when these things came up, the president's big failing was his inability to hide his contempt for many of the people who occupy Capitol Hill. Now it's a new day, and he needs to be so perpetually and visibly available that the negotiators beg to be left alone.

If all else fails, strap John Boehner to the roof of a car.

— Gail Collins is a New York Times columnist.

Can Republicans adapt?

Nicholas D. Kristof

This was one that the Republicans really should have won.

Given the weak economy, American voters were open to firing President Barack Obama. In Europe, in similar circumstances, one government after another lost re-election. And, at the beginning of this year, it looked as if the Republicans might win control of the U.S. Senate as well.

Yet it wasn't the Democrats who won so much as the Republicans who lost — at a most basic level, because of demography. A coalition of aging white men is a recipe for failure in a nation that increasingly looks like a rainbow.

Schadenfreude may excuse Democrats' smiles for a few days, but these trends portend a potential disaster not just for the Republican Party but for the health of our political system. America needs a plausible center-right opposition party to hold Obama's feet to the fire, not just a collection of Tea Party cranks.

So liberals as well as conservatives should be rooting for the Republican Party to feel sufficiently shaken that it shifts to the center. One hopeful sign is that political parties usually care more about winning than about purism. Thus the Democratic Party embraced the pragmatic center-left Bill Clinton in 1992 after three consecutive losses in presidential elections.

That was painful for many liberals, who cringed when Clinton interrupted campaigning in the 1992 primary to burnish his law-and-order credentials by overseeing the execution of a mentally impaired murderer. But it was, on balance, less painful than losing again.

You would expect the Republican Party to make a similar lurch to the center. But many Republican leaders still inhabit a bubble. It was stunning how many, from Karl Rove to Newt Gingrich, seemed to expect a Mitt Romney victory. And some of the right-wing postmortems are suggesting that Romney lost because he was too liberal — which constitutes a definition of delusional.

Imagine what would have happened if the Republican nominee had been Gingrich or Rick Santorum. We surely would have seen a Democratic landslide.

On the other hand, if the Republicans had nominated Jon Huntsman Jr., they might have been the ones celebrating right now. But he had no chance in Republican primaries because primary voters are their party's worst enemy.

Part of the problem, I think, is the profusion of right-wing radio and television programs. Democrats complain furiously that Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck and Sean Hannity smear the left, but I wonder if the bigger loser isn't the Republican Party itself. Those shows whip up a frenzy in their audience, torpedoing Republican moderates and instilling paranoia on issues like immigration.

All this sound and fury enmeshes the Republican Party in an ideological cocoon and impedes it from reaching out to swing-state centrists, or even understanding them. The vortex spins ever faster and risks becoming an ideological black hole.

In 2002, a book was published called "The Emerging Democratic Majority." It argued that Democrats would gain because of their strength in expanding demographics such as Hispanics, Asian-Americans and working women. It seemed persuasive until Republicans clobbered Democrats in the next couple of elections.

But perhaps that book was ahead of its time. This was the first election in which Hispanic voters made up a double-digit share of the electorate, according to CNN exit polls — 10 percent, doubled from 1996 — and more than 7 out of 10 Hispanic voters supported Obama.

That wasn't inevitable. In 2004, exit polls suggested that President George W. Bush received 44 percent of the Hispanic vote. But Republicans became obstructionist on immigration and then veered into offensive demagogy in opposing the nomination of Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court. The Hispanic vote tumbled by increasing numbers into the Democrats' laps.

Then there are women. The paternalistic comments about rape by a few male Republican candidates resonated so broadly because they reflected the perception of the GOP as a conclave of out-of-touch men. As Rep. Todd Akin of Missouri might put it, when a candidate emerges with offensive views about rape, "the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down." Namely, they vote Democratic.

America is changing. After this election, a record 20 senators will be women, almost all of them Democrats. Opposition to same-sex marriage used to be a way for Republicans to trumpet their morality; now it's seen as highlighting their bigotry.

An astonishing 45 percent of Obama voters were members of minority groups, according to The Times' Nate Silver. Many others were women or young people. That's the future of America, and if the Republican Party remains a purist cohort built around grumpy old white men, it is committing suicide. That's bad not just for conservatives but for our entire country.

— Nicholas D. Kristof is a New York Times columnist. Contact him at Facebook.com/Kristof, Twitter.com/NickKristof or by mail at The New York Times, 620 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10018.

Former local hoops player making it on TV Page 39 College hoops tip off in style tonight Page 41

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Arawaks seek season sweep of Kean tonight

Daily News Photo by TIM CHAPMAN

St. Thomas-St. John Private Schools Arawaks senior Omar Henderson tackles senior teammate Patrick Leonard during Thursday's practice at Antilles School.

By TIM CHAPMAN
Daily News Staff

TACKLE FOOTBALL

ST. THOMAS — Luke Neely might not know where to begin if he were in an opposing coach's position and had to gameplan against his St. Thomas-St. John Private Schools Arawaks. The variety of formations running through his no-huddle offense can be a headache for defenses.

"It's difficult," Neely said. "We're a multi-formation, multi-game offense. We run a power game, a gap scheme to zone scheme. It's a lot to prepare for. Teams could potentially stop us."

Ivanna Eudora Kean High School (1-3) hopes to turn that potential into reality when the two teams meet at 7 tonight in an IAA tackle football game at Lionel Roberts Stadium.

The Arawaks (2-1) crushed the Devil Rays, 44-0, in the season opener, which ended early in the fourth quarter because of the league's mercy rule.

"We hope that the defense, by now, has learned the schemes," Kean High coach Elroy Donovan Jr. said. "It was the first game of the season and we have a lot of young guys."

Donovan is eager to see if his defense learned from the tough lessons handed out by the Arawaks' senior tailback tandem of Chris Cilliers and David McDonald.

Cilliers pounded his way to two rushing touchdowns and a receiving touchdown, and McDonald led the team with 75 rushing yards on seven carries. At 210 pounds, Cilliers can easily shed routine tackles.

"He's a big, strong guy," Donovan said. "Our guys have to realize that you have to adjust for that type of running back. We can't expect to wrap him up high and take him down."

At 170 pounds, McDonald offers a speedy change of pace. But he won't shy away from contact.

"They're tough guys to bring down," Neely said. "They're bruisers and it's gonna take two or three guys to bring them down at any time."

Arawaks dropped a 22-8 game

See FOOTBALL, page 42

Kean High's energy lifts them over Ss. Peter and Paul, 4-1

By TIM CHAPMAN
Daily News Staff

VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

ST. THOMAS — There is no question who the vocal leader is on the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School girls varsity volleyball team. Chantell Grant can be heard loud and clear after nearly every point.

After dropping the first game by 11 points against Ss. Peter and Paul on Thursday at Kean High, Grant and the Lady Rays began communicating. The result was a loose, energetic and more confident team through the next three games as Kean High won the match, 4-1 (14-25, 26-24, 25-16, 25-18).

"I got to cheer them up," Grant said. "That's that motivation. My team's gonna back me up too, you know."

Grant backed up her talk and recorded two consecutive aces in the final game to push the lead to 17-9. She was also involved in a signature point of the match when three Kean High players on three different hits had to lunge and punch at the ball with one hand to keep the volley alive.

The Lady Jaguars were stunned when Kean sophomore Akia Frett finished that point by hitting

See VOLLEYBALL, page 42

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Page 411 ~ b3;
Page 412 ~ b3; b6; b7C;
Page 415 ~ b3;
Page 416 ~ b3;
Page 417 ~ b3;

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X   Deleted Page(s)    X
X   No Duplication Fee X
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XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Title and Character of Case:

EPSTEIN, JEFFREY
[redacted]

Date Property Acquired: Source from which Property Acquired:
DET. [redacted]
08/28/2006 345 SOUTH COUNTY ROAD
PALM BEACH FL 33480

b6
b7C

Anticipated Disposition: Acquired By: Case Agent:
[redacted]

Description of Property: Date Entered
1B 1

1) ONE PHONE MESSAGE BOOK PBPD05-1024 (1)
2) THREE PHONE MESSAGE BOOKS.....(2)
3) ONE FILE FOLDER WITH TWO FILES.....(3)
4) SHREDDED PAPER.....(4)
5) ONE FILE FOLDER - ORANGE (5)
6) BEIGE MASSAGE TABLE.....(6)
7) BROWN MASSAGE TABLE.....(7)
8) BLACK FRAMED PHOTO OF NUDE GIRL.....(8)
9) NINE PICTURES IN FRAMES (9)
10) EIGHT PHOTOS FROM OFFICE (10)
11) TWO PHOTOS - SITTING ROOM (11)
12) TWO PHOTOS - TABLE.....(12)
13) TWO VHS TAPES - POOL AREA (13)
14) TWO CDS - MARKED "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" (14)
15) THREE FRAMED PHOTOS - CABANA (15)
16) ONE MESSAGE PAD - 1ST FLOOR (16)
17) ONE MESSAGE PAD - DESK (17)
18) THREE CDS - DESK (18)
19) ONE 8MM - DESK (19)
20) UNFRAMED PHOTOS - DESK (20)
21) TWO FRAMED PHOTOS - DESK (21)
22) TWO FRAMED PHOTOS - TABLE (22)
23) THREE SOAPS ON A ROPE (23)
24) TWO VIBRATORS - "TWIN TORPEDO" (24)
25) TWO SOAPS ON A ROPE (25)
26) ONE LARGE FRAMED PICTURE - MASTER BEDROOM (26)
27) ONE HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT - [redacted] (27)
28) ONE BOTTLE OF JOY JELLY - MASTER BEDROOM (28)
29) THREE VIDEO TAPES - MASTER BEDROOM (29)
30) SIX FRAMED PHOTOS - MASTER BEDROOM, BATHROOM (30)

Barcode: Location: 09/05/2006

Case Number: 31E-MM-108062
Owning Office: MIAMI

File Copy

31E-MM-108062-1B1

Chain of Custody FD-192

Case ID . : 31E-MM-108062 1B1 Barcode . :

Accepted By:
Printed Name: [redacted] Signature: [redacted] b6 b7C

Reason:..Collected..... Date/Time: 08/28/2006 11:00 am

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

WEAPONS CHECKED & CLEARED BY FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR

Printed Name:..... Signature:..... Date:.....

Title and Character of Case:

EPSTEIN, JEFFREY
[redacted]

Date Property Acquired: 08/28/2006

Source from which Property Acquired:
DET. [redacted]
345 SOUTH COUNTY ROAD
PALM BEACH FL 33480

b6
b7C

Anticipated Disposition:

Acquired By: Case Agent:
[redacted]

Description of Property: Date Entered
1B 2

31) ONE GREEN MASSAGE TABLE.....PBPD05-1024 (31)
32) ONE THRIFTY RENTAL AGREEMENT.....(32)
33) NOTE FROM [redacted].....(33)
34) ELEVEN CDS - OFFICE ..... (34)
35) MESSAGE BOOK - GUEST HOUSE.....(49)
(36) ONE MESSAGE BOOK.....(50)
(37) TWO COMPACT FLASH CARDS.....(51)
(38) SIX CDS - GUEST HOUSE.....(52)
(39) POWER CORD TO CPU - GUEST HOUSE.....(54)
(40) CPU - OFFICE.....(55)
41) ONE POWER CORD TO CPU - OFFICE.....(56)
42) THREE CDS - OFFICE.....(57)
43) ONE PEACH MASSAGE TABLE.....(58)
44) ONE GREEN FRAMED PHOTO (59)

Barcode: Location: 09/05/2006

Case Number: 31E-MM-108062
Owning Office: MIAMI

31E-MM-108062-1B2

Chain of Custody FD-192

Case ID . : 31E-MM-108062 1B2 Barcode . :

Accepted By:
Printed Name [redacted] . Signature [redacted] b6 b7C

Reason:..Collected..... Date/Time: 08/28/2006 11:50 am..

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

WEAPONS CHECKED & CLEARED BY FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR

Printed Name:..... Signature:..... Date:.....

Title and Character of Case:

EPSTEIN, JEFFREY
[redacted]

Date Property Acquired: Source from which Property Acquired:
DET [redacted]
08/28/2006 345 SOUTH COUNTY ROAD
PALM BEACH FL 33480

b6
b7C

Anticipated Disposition: Acquired By: Case Agent:
[redacted]

Description of Property: Date Entered
1B 3

1) TAPED CONVERSATION PBPD 05-237(1)
2) AUDIO TAPE #1 PBPD 05-243(1)
3) AUDIO TAPE #2 (2)
4) COPY OF TAPE #1 (3)
5) MICRO TAPE PBPD 05-256(1)
6) PHOTO LINE-UP PBPD 05-257(1)
7) AUDIO TAPE PBPD 05-294(1)
8) MICRO TAPE (2)
9) CD PBPD 05-295(2)
10) C-90 CASSETTE PBPD 05-313(1)
11) A/X MAIL [redacted] PBPD 05-378(1)
12) WHITE PAPER [redacted] .....(2)
13) MESSAGE [redacted] (3)
14) WHITE PAPER [redacted] .....(4)
15) MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD [redacted] (5)
16) WHITE PAPER [redacted] PBPD 05-379(1)
17) WHITE PAPER FLIGHT INFO (2)
18) THREE WHITE PAPERS PREMIO COMPUTER INC (3)
19) WHITE PAPER PHONE # PBPD 05-380(1)
20) YELLOW RECEIPT 04/04/05 (2)
21) WHITE PAPER [redacted] (3)
22) WHITE PAPER [redacted] (4)
23) WHITE PAPER FLIGHT 04/05/05 (5)
24) WHITE PAPER [redacted] (6)

Barcode: Location: 09/06/2006

Case Number: 31E-MM-108062
Owning Office: MIAMI

31E-MM-108062-1B3

Chain of Custody FD-192

Case ID . : 31E-MM-108062 1B3 Barcode . :

Accepted By:
Printed Name: [redacted] ... Signature [redacted] b6 b7C

Reason: ..Collected..... Date/Time: 08/28/2006 11:00am

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

WEAPONS CHECKED & CLEARED BY FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR

Printed Name:..... Signature:..... Date:.....

Title and Character of Case:

EPSTEIN, JEFFREY
[redacted]

b6
b7C

Date Property Acquired: 08/28/2006

Source from which Property Acquired:
DET. [redacted]
345 SOUTH COUNTY ROAD
PALM BEACH FL 33480

Anticipated Disposition: Acquired By: Case Agent:
[redacted]

Description of Property: Date Entered
1B 4

1) WHITE PAPER [redacted] PBPD 05-381 (1)
2) WHITE PAPER JET BLUE RECEIPT (2)
3) WHITE PAPER [redacted] (3)
4) WHITE PAPER [redacted] (4)
5) MESSAGE [redacted] (5)
6) WHITE PAPER [redacted] (6)
7) WHITE PAPER [redacted] (7)
8) WHITE PAPER [redacted] (8)
9) WHITE PAPER [redacted] (9)
10) WHITE PAPER ST. BARTHS (10)
11) MESSAGE - [redacted] (11)
12) MESSAGE - [redacted] ..... (12)
13) WHITE PAPER - [redacted] (13)
14) MESSAGE [redacted] (14)
15) MESSAGE - [redacted] (15)
16) MESSAGE [redacted] GIRL (16)
17) WHITE PAPER - [redacted] (17)
18) WHITE PAPER # [redacted] (18)
19) WHITE PAPER - [redacted] (19)
20) WHITE PAPER - [redacted] (20)
21) WHITE PAPER (917) (21)
22) WHITE PAPER [redacted] (22)
23) PHONE # PRINT OUT (23)

Barcode: Location: 09/06/2006

Case Number: 31E-MM-108062
Owning Office: MIAMI

31E-MM-108062-1B4

Chain of Custody FD-192

b6
b7C

Case ID . : 31E-MM-108062 1B4 Barcode . :

Accepted By:
Printed Name: [redacted] Signature: [redacted]

Reason:..Collected..... Date/Time:..08/28/2006..11:50am

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

WEAPONS CHECKED & CLEARED BY FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR

Printed Name:..... Signature:..... Date:.....

Title and Character of Case:

EPSTEIN, JEFFREY
[redacted]

Date Property Acquired: 08/28/2006

Source from which Property Acquired:
DET [redacted]
345 SOUTH COUNTY ROAD
PALM BEACH FL 33480

b6
b7C

Anticipated Disposition:

Acquired By: [redacted]

Case Agent:

Description of Property: Date Entered
1B 5

1)	FIVE MESSAGE PRINTOUTS	PBPD 05-382	(1)
2)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(2)
3)	MESSAGE [redacted]		(3)
4)	MESSAGE [redacted]		(4)
5)	MESSAGE [redacted]		(5)
6)	MESSAGE [redacted]		(6)
7)	MESSAGE [redacted]		(7)
8)	CLEAR PLASTIC STICK		(8)
9)	TWELVE WHITE PAPER - EXPENDITURES	PBPD 05-383	(1)
10)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(2)
11)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(3)
12)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(4)
13)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(5)
14)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(6)
15)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(7)
16)	WHITE PAPER #.....		(8)
17)	MESSAGE [redacted]	PBPD 05-384	(1)
18)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(2)
19)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(3)
20)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(4)
21)	MESSAGE [redacted]		(5)
22)	MESSAGE #		(6)
23)	MESSAGE [redacted]		(7)
24)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(8)
25)	.WHITE PAPER (917)	PBPD 05-385	(1)
26)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(2)
27)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(3)
28)	WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(4)
29)	WHITE PAPER [redacted].....		(5)
30)	FOUR WHITE PAPERS		(6)

Barcode: Location: 09/06/2006

Case Number: 31E-MM-108062
Owning Office: MIAMI

31E-MM-108062-1B5

Chain of Custody FD-192

Case ID . : 31E-MM-108062 1B5 Barcode . :

Accepted By:
Printed Name: [redacted] Signature [redacted] b6 b7C

Reason:..Collected..... Date/Time: 08/28/2006 11:50 am

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

WEAPONS CHECKED & CLEARED BY FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR

Printed Name:..... Signature:..... Date:.....

Title and Character of Case:

EPSTEIN, JEFFREY
[redacted]

Date Property Acquired: 08/28/2006

Source from which Property Acquired:
DET [redacted]
345 SOUTH COUNTY ROAD
PALM BEACH FL 33480

b6
b7C

Anticipated Disposition: Acquired By: Case Agent:
[redacted]

Description of Property: Date Entered
1B 6

1) MEDICAL SUPPLIES	PBPD 05-386	(1)
2) 727 LETTERHEAD		(2)
3) INVOICE #42700		(3)
4) AMAZON.COM [redacted]		(4)
5) WHITE PAPER [redacted]		(5)
6) MESSAGE FROM [redacted]		(6)
7) MESSAGE FROM [redacted]		(7)
8) WHITE PAPER 2#S		(8)
9) WHITE PAPER (917)		(9)
10) MISC. DOCUMENTS - TRASH PULL	PBPD 05-874	(1)
11) MISC. PAPERWORK - TRASH PULL	PBPD 05-878	(1)
12) TWO MAGAZINES - TRASH PULL	PBPD 05-901	(1)
13) PAPER WITH [redacted] - TRASH PULL	PBPD 05-915	(1)
14) VHS T-160 CASSETTE	PBPD 05-929	(1)
15) SONY MICRO CASSETTE		(2)
16) SONY MICRO CASSETTE		(3)
17) SONY MICRO CASSETTE		(4)
18) SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 05-937	(1)
19) SONY MICRO CASSETTE		(2)
20) SONY MICRO CASSETTE		(3)
21) SONY MICRO CASSETTE		(4)
22) MISC PAPERWORK - TRASH PULL	PBPD 05-941	(1)
23) SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 05-942	(1)
24) SONY MICRO CASSETTE		(2)
25) MISC PAPERS - TRASH PULL	PBPD 05-943	(1)
26) CLEAR PIECE OF PLASTIC	PBPD 05-944	(1)
27) MISC PIECES OF PAPER - TRASH PULL		(2)
28) SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 05-945	(1)
29) SONY MICRO CASSETTE		(2)

Barcode: Location: 09/06/2006

Case Number: 31E-MM-108062
Owning Office: MIAMI

31E-MM-108062-1B6

Chain of Custody FD-192

b6
b7C

Case ID . : 31E-MM-108062 1B6 Barcode . :

Accepted By:
Printed Name: [redacted] Signature: [redacted]

Reason: Collected Date/Time: 08/28/2006 11:00a

Accepted By:
Printed Name: Signature:

Reason: Date/Time:

Accepted By:
Printed Name: Signature:

Reason: Date/Time:

Accepted By:
Printed Name: Signature:

Reason: Date/Time:

Accepted By:
Printed Name: Signature:

Reason: Date/Time:

Accepted By:
Printed Name: Signature:

Reason: Date/Time:

Accepted By:
Printed Name: Signature:

Reason: Date/Time:

Accepted By:
Printed Name: Signature:

Reason: Date/Time:

Accepted By:
Printed Name: Signature:

Reason: Date/Time:

WEAPONS CHECKED & CLEARED BY FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR

Printed Name: Signature: Date:

Title and Character of Case:

EPSTEIN, JEFFREY
[redacted]

Date Property Acquired: 08/28/2006

Source from which Property Acquired:
DET [redacted]
345 SOUTH COUNTY ROAD
PALM BEACH FL 33480

b6
b7C

Anticipated Disposition: Acquired By: Case Agent:
[redacted]

Description of Property: Date Entered
1B 7

1)	SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBDP 05-972(1)
2)	SONY MICRO CASSETTE	(2)
3)	SONY MICRO CASSETTE	(3)
4)	MISC PAPERWORK - TRASH PULL	PBPD 05-1005(1)
5)	THREE FLOOR PLANS	PBPD 05-1023(1)
6)	DRAWING [redacted]	PBPD 05-1025(1)
7)	MISC PHONE MESSAGES - TRASH PULL	PBPD 05-1027(1)
8)	T-160 VIDEO CASSETTE	PBPD 05-1052(1)
9)	SONY MICRO CASSETTE	(2)
10)	SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 05-1064(1)
11)	THREE EMAIL FROM DMV/DL	(2)
12)	VHS VIDEO CASSETTE	PBPD 05-1069(1)
13)	VHS VIDEO CASSETTE	(2)
14)	CD	PBPD 05-1079(2)
15)	MINI DV TAPE	PBPD 05-1080(1)
16)	VHS VIDEO TAPE...	(2)
17)	MINI DV TAPE	(3)
18)	SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 05-1087(1)
19)	SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 05-1090(1)
20)	SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 05-1092(1)
21)	PHOTO LINE-UP	(2)
22)	SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 05-1203(1)

Barcode: Location: 09/06/2006

Case Number: 31E-MM-108062
Owning Office: MIAMI

Em

31E-MM-108062-1B7

Chain of Custody FD-192

Case ID . : 31E-MM-108062 1B7 Barcode . :

Accepted By:
Printed Name: [redacted] ... Signature: [redacted] b6 b7C

Reason: ..Collected..... Date/Time: 08/28/2006 11:00am

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

WEAPONS CHECKED & CLEARED BY FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR

Printed Name:..... Signature:..... Date:.....

Title and Character of Case:

EPSTEIN, JEFFREY
[redacted]

Date Property Acquired: 08/28/2006

Source from which Property Acquired:
DET [redacted]
345 SOUTH COUNTY ROAD
PALM BEACH FL 33480

b6
b7c

Anticipated Disposition:

Acquired By: [redacted]

Case Agent:

Description of Property: Date Entered
1B 8

1) VHS TAPE OF SURVEILLANCE	PBPD 05-1205	(1)
2) VHS TAPE OF SURVEILLANCE		(2)
3) VHS TAPE		(3)
4) VHS TAPE		(4)
5) VHS TAPE		(5)
6) VHS TAPE		(6)
7) VHS TAPE		(7)
8) SIXTEEN DVD-R DISCS PBSO	PBPD 05-1219	(1)
9) CINGULAR ENVELOPE WITH SUBPOENA INFO	PBPD 05-1245	(1)
10) CINGULAR WIRELESS CD		(2)
11) SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 06-21	(1)
12) GREEN FOLDER [redacted]	PBPD 06-24	(1)
13) SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 06-39	(1)
14) SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 06-59	(1)
15) SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 06-95	(1)
16) T-160 VIDEO CASSETTE	PBPD 06-120	(1)
17) SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 06-182	(1)
18) SONY MICRO CASSETTE	PBPD 06-348	(1)
19) CD	PBPD 06-397	(1)

Barcode: Location: 09/06/2006

Case Number: 31E-MM-108062
Owning Office: MIAMI

31E-MM-108062-1B8

Chain of Custody FD-192

b6
b7C

Case ID . : 31E-MM-108062 1B8 Barcode . :

Accepted By:
Printed Name: Signature:

Reason:..Collected..... Date/Time: 08/28/2006 11:00am

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

Accepted By:
Printed Name:..... Signature:.....

Reason:..... Date/Time:.....

WEAPONS CHECKED & CLEARED BY FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR

Printed Name:..... Signature:..... Date:.....

(Rev. 01-31-2003)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE **Date:** 07/24/2006

To: Miami **Attn:** SSA [redacted]

From: Miami
Squad PB-2, PBCRA
Contact: SA [redacted]

Approved By: [redacted]

Drafted By: [redacted]

Case ID #: 31E-MM 272-MM-C87675-28003

Title: JEFFREY EPSTEIN; [redacted]
WSTA - CHILD PROSTITUTION

OPEN (REOPEN)
CLASS 31 ALPHA E
ORIGIN MM DATE 2/24/06

b6
b7C

Synopsis: To request case be opened and assigned. OIA SA [redacted]

Details: From March 2005 through February 2006, the Palm Beach County Police Department conducted an investigation involving the Subjects, Jeffrey Epstein, DOB 01/20/1953, [redacted] Multiple underage females, who all attend or attended one local area high school, [redacted], were recruited by [redacted] for the purposes of engaging in sexual activity with Jeffery Epstein. The sexual activity between Epstein and the minors occurred at Epstein's residence, 358 El Brillo Way, Palm Beach, Florida. [redacted] received monetary compensation for her recruitment and, in some incidents, her delivery of the underage females. Appointments were arranged for Epstein by [redacted]

Once the underage females arrived at Epstein's residence, [redacted]

Cat 203 [redacted] 01.EC

2

31E-MM-108062-1

To: Miami From: Miami
Re: 31E-MM, 07/24/2006

[redacted]

b6
b7C

It is requested by SA [redacted] that the above captioned case be opened and assigned.

♦♦

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018893

Probable Cause Affidavit

Palm Beach Police Department

Agency ORI# FLO 500600

Police Case#: 05-368 (1)

Defendant: Jeffrey Epstein
Race/Sex: White Male
DOB: 01-20-1953
Charges: Unlawful Sexual Activity with a Minor (4) counts
Lewd and Lascivious Molestation

From March 15, 2005, through February 2006, the Palm Beach Police Department conducted a sexual battery investigation involving Jeffrey Epstein, [redacted] and [redacted]. Sworn taped statements were taken from five victims and seventeen witnesses concerning massages and unlawful sexual activity that took place at the residence of Jeffrey Epstein, 358 El Brillo Way, Palm Beach. Several of the victims were recruited by and brought to the residence by [redacted] to perform massages for Epstein, for which [redacted] received monetary compensation. During the visit they would be introduced to [redacted] Epstein's assistant, who in turn would record their telephone numbers and name. The victims would be brought to Epstein's bedroom to provide the massage. Epstein would enter the room and order the victims to remove their clothing to provide the massage. As the victims complied and provided the massages, Epstein would rub his fingers on their vaginas. On occasion, Epstein would introduce a massager/vibrator and rub the victims vaginas as they provided the massage. On three separate occasions, Epstein had intercourse and inserted his penis/fingers in the victims vaginas. At the conclusion of the massages the victims were paid sums of money ranging from $200 - $1,000. The facts, as reported, are as follows:

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On 03/15/2005, A fourteen year old white female, hereinafter referred to as '[redacted]' dob [redacted] and her family reported unlawful sexual activity which occurred at a residence within the Town of Palm Beach. [redacted] reported that a subject known to her as "Jeff" had touched her vaginal area with a vibrator/massager while within his residence. "Jeff" was later identified as Jeffrey Epstein through a photo line up.

During a sworn taped interview, [redacted] stated that [redacted] a cousin of [redacted] boyfriend and classmate at [redacted] worked for a wealthy man and did sexual favors for him. She also admitted that [redacted] had offered her an opportunity to make money. During the beginning of the month of February 2005, [redacted] explained that she was first approached by [redacted] to go with her to Epstein's house. [redacted] stated that [redacted] along with a Hispanic female, later identified at [redacted] pick her up at her father's house on a Sunday. [redacted] was not sure of the exact dates but knew it was a Sunday. [redacted] told her father that they were going shopping but in reality [redacted] drove them to Palm Beach. During the drive a

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County of Palm Beach

Signature/Arresting Officer

Signature of Police Officer (F.S.S. 117.10)

Date: 05/01/2006

31E-MM-108062-2

conversation occurred between [redacted] and [redacted] whereas [redacted] reportedly told [redacted] that if Jeff asked her age, she should say she was eighteen. It was later confirmed by the [redacted] father that [redacted] picked his daughter up on February 6, 2005. According to [redacted] father, [redacted] drove a pick up truck. b6 b7C

[redacted] described Epstein's house as a two-story pink house with a Cadillac Escalade parked in the driveway. She recalled that Jeff's house was on a dead end street. Upon arriving at the house [redacted] stated that they walked up a driveway, past what appeared to be a small guard/security room. A male approaching them asking what they wanted. [redacted] stated they were there to see Epstein. The male allowed them to continue walking up to the house. [redacted] stated the man told them that Epstein was not there but was expected back. He allowed them to enter the house, via the kitchen. He offered them something to drink while they waited inside. Shortly thereafter, Epstein and his assistant, described as white female with blond hair and later identified as [redacted] entered the kitchen. Epstein introduced himself to [redacted] described Epstein as being approximately forty-five years old, having a long face and bushy eyebrows, with graying hair.

[redacted] and Epstein left the kitchen leaving [redacted] alone in the kitchen. They returned a short time later. They all spoke briefly in the kitchen. [redacted] was instructed to follow [redacted] upstairs. [redacted] recalled walking up a flight of stairs, lined with photographs, to a room that had a massage table in it. Upon entering the room there was a large bathroom to the right and a hot pink and green sofa in the room. There was a door on each side of the sofa. [redacted] recalled there being a mural of a naked woman in the room, as well as several photographs of naked women on a shelf. [redacted] told the victim that Epstein would be up in a second.

Epstein entered the room wearing only a towel and told [redacted] to take off her clothes. [redacted] stated Epstein was stern when he told her to take off her clothes. [redacted] said she did not know what to do as she was the only one there in the room so she took off her shirt leaving her bra on. Epstein had removed his towel and told the [redacted] to take off everything. [redacted] stated Epstein was nude when he took his towel off, placing it on the floor as he laid down on the table. [redacted] stated she then removed her pants leaving her thong panties on. Epstein then instructed her to give him a massage pointing to a specific lotion for her to use. As [redacted] began to give Epstein the massage, he told her to get on his back. [redacted] stated she straddled herself on Epstein's back whereby her exposed buttocks were touching Epstein's bare buttocks. [redacted] said Epstein was specific in his instruction to her on how to massage him, telling her to go clockwise or counter clockwise. Epstein then turned over and instructed [redacted] to massage his chest. [redacted] was now standing on the ground and resumed massaging Epstein's chest area. [redacted] stated Epstein held onto the small of her back as she massaged his chest and shoulder area. Epstein then turned to his side and started to rub his penis in an up and down motion. Epstein then pulled out a purple vibrator and began to

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massage [redacted] vaginal area. [redacted] stated there was no penetration as the vibrator was on top of her underwear. [redacted] recalled Epstein ejaculating because he had to use the towel to wipe himself as he got off the table. Epstein then left the room and [redacted] got dressed. She went back downstairs where she met with [redacted]. [redacted] said she was paid three hundred dollars in cash from Epstein. Before she left, Epstein asked [redacted] to leave her phone number. As [redacted] [redacted] and [redacted] were leaving the house, [redacted] told [redacted] she received two hundred dollars that day for bringing her.

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During the course of the investigation, parental consent was granted for [redacted] to assist with the investigation. At our direction [redacted] conducted controlled taped phone calls to [redacted]'s cellular telephone [redacted]. [redacted] spoke with [redacted] in an attempt to arrange another meeting with Epstein. [redacted] asked [redacted] what did she need to do to make more money. [redacted] stated, "the more you do, the more you get paid." [redacted] had subsequently called back [redacted] and left a voice mail message for her indicating that she had set up an appointment for [redacted] to go to Epstein's house at 11:00 am on April 5, 2005. This message was recorded from [redacted] voice mail.

Based on the above, trash pulls were established at Epstein's residence with Supervisor Tony Higgins of the Sanitation Bureau of the Town of Palm Beach. The trash pull from April 5, 2005 revealed a telephone message for Epstein which stated Haley and [redacted] name at 11:00 am. This was the time frame [redacted] had informed [redacted] to be ready to go work at Epstein's house.

On October 3, 2005, Sgt Frick and I went to [redacted]'s residence and viewed her vehicle parked in the driveway, a red Dodge Neon. Sgt. Frick and I knocked on the door and met with [redacted]. [redacted] was told that we were investigating a claim involving Jeffrey Epstein of El Brillo Way, in Palm Beach. [redacted] was asked if she would accompany us back to the police station for further questioning. She was also told that at the conclusion of the interview she would be returned home. [redacted] voluntarily came with us back to the Palm Beach Police Department.

Upon our arrival at the police station, [redacted] was brought to the interview room in the Detective Bureau where I obtained a taped, sworn statement. I began the interview by asking [redacted] how she became acquainted with Epstein. [redacted] stated that approximately two years ago, just after she turned 17 years of age, she was approached by a friend named [redacted] at the Canopy Beach Resort in Rivera Beach. [redacted] was asked if she wanted to make money. She was told she would have to provide a massage and should make $200.00. [redacted] thought about the offer and agreed to meet with Jeffrey.

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(Unknown last name) and Tony (Unknown last name) picked up and she was taken to Epstein's house. Upon her arrival to the house she was introduced to Epstein in the kitchen of the house. She was also introduced to a white female known to her as . She was led upstairs to the main bedroom known to her as Jeff Epstein's bedroom. arranged the massage table and covered the table with a sheet. She brought out the massage oils and laid them next to the massage bed. , then left the room and informed Jeff would be in, in a minute. Jeff entered the bedroom wearing only a towel. He removed the towel and laid nude on the massage table. He laid on the table onto his stomach and picked a massage oil for to rub on him. During the massage, stated "He tried to touch me and I stopped him." I asked how he tried to touch her. stated that Epstein grabbed her buttocks and she felt uncomfortable. told Epstein, I'll massage you but I don't want to be touched. stated she performed the massage naked. At the conclusion of the massage, Epstein paid $200.

After the massage Epstein stated to that he understood she was not comfortable, but he would pay her if she brought over some girls. He told her the younger the better. stated she once tried to bring a 23 year old female and Epstein stated that the female was too old. stated that in total she only remembers six girls that she brought to see Epstein, each time she was paid $200. stated she had brought the following girls: (a16 year old female) (a 16 year old female) and said that at the time she brought these girls to Epstein's house they were all14 through 16 years of age. I asked which one was the youngest. advised was the youngest as she was fourteen when the massage occurred. stated every girl she brought knew what to expect when they arrived. They were told they would provide a massage, possibly naked, and allow some touching. I asked her if was aware. She stated every girl she brought knew what to expect. She explained she knew that wanted to make money. She approached and explained about going to work for Jeff, agreed and arrangements were made to bring her to Epstein's house on a weekend. stated that she and (Later identified as picked up at her house. stated that at that time she was driving a red pickup truck. They traveled to Epstein's house and entered through the kitchen door. They met with the house chef and Epstein's assistant . was introduced to Epstein while they were in the kitchen area. led upstairs and Epstein went upstairs. When the massage was over returned to the kitchen area. stated she was paid $200.00 for bringing to Epstein's house. stated told her she was paid $300.00 for the massage.

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stated that was the last person she brought to Epstein's house. She had changed her cellular number to avoid being contacted by . She continued stating that she had no direct contact with Epstein

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when he was going to travel to Palm Beach. [redacted] said when Epstein announces to his assistant, [redacted] that he is traveling to Palm Beach, [redacted] would then contact [redacted] to arrange girls to "work" for Epstein. [redacted] stated that once her parents discovered that she was visiting Epstein, they disapproved of the encounters with him and she stopped. [redacted] further stated that [redacted] still tries to call [redacted]'s house and leaves messages.

Sgt Frick entered the room and explained to [redacted] that based on her own statements, she had implicated herself by bringing underage girls to Epstein's house. [redacted] provided cellular telephone numbers for the girls she had mentioned previously. Additionally, she also provided possible addresses and areas in which they lived.

As [redacted] was being taken home in the vehicle, a tape recorder was placed within the vehicle to record any conversations within the vehicle. During the drive back to her home, [redacted] made the comment " I'm like a Heidi Fleiss." (Hollywood Madam who sent girls to clients for sexual favors in California). [redacted] was dropped off at her house without incident.

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On October 3, 2005, Sgt Frick and I went to speak with [redacted] a sixteen year-old female who was brought to Epstein's residence by [redacted]. We met with [redacted] mother at their front door. We explained the ongoing investigation and asked to speak with [redacted] as we had information that she had "worked" for Jeff. Mrs [redacted] introduced us to her husband and allowed us entry into the home. We sat in the dining room and met with [redacted] Date of Birth [redacted] As she was under the age of eighteen, Mrs [redacted] was advised we would be speaking with her. She expressed if her daughter had information, she wanted to assist. We interviewed [redacted] who denied having any inappropriate encounters with Jeff (Epstein). She stated she had gone to Jeff's house with [redacted] approximately eight months ago and sat in the kitchen with the house chef, but nothing happened. As the parents were present during the interview, we felt that [redacted] was withholding information from us. She made several comments as to putting the entire incident behind her. I left my telephone number and advised should she wish to speak with me again to telephone me. Sgt Frick and I thanked Mrs. [redacted] for her time and left the area. She stated she would ask [redacted] again after we left as to what happened at Epstein's house. I informed her that [redacted] had my telephone number and hopefully she would call.

On October 4, 2005, Det Dawson and I drove to the [redacted] home and met with [redacted] and [redacted], dob [redacted]. During a sworn taped statement, [redacted] stated approximately a year ago when she was seventeen years old, she was taken to a house by [redacted] [redacted] stated she knows [redacted] because they both attend [redacted] She was told she could make money working

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for Jeff. She was told she would have to provide a massage to Jeff. [ ] stated upon her arrival to the house she was brought to the kitchen area by [redacted]. They met with the house chef who was already in the kitchen area. [ ] stated [redacted] would wait for her in the kitchen. [ ] was introduced to [redacted], Jeff's assistant, who brought her upstairs to the master bedroom. [redacted] prepared the room and massage table for a massage. Epstein entered the room wearing only a towel and she provided a massage. [ ] stated she kept her clothes on during the massage. She advised sometime during the massage, Epstein grabbed her buttocks and pulled her close to him. [ ] said she was uncomfortable by the incident involving Jeff. At the conclusion of the massage, she was paid $200.00 for the massage. I asked [ ] if she has any formal training in massages to which she replied no. I asked her if [redacted] received any monies for taking her to perform the massage. [ ] stated [redacted] had received money for taking her there but was unsure in the amount. [ ] stated she returned to Epstein's house on another occasion with [redacted] and another girl [ ] stated she waited in the kitchen with [redacted], while [ ] was taken upstairs by [redacted]. [ ] stated she only did the massage once as she was uncomfortable with the whole experience.

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At the conclusion of the interview, the tape was stopped. I was informed that [redacted] had attempted to reach [ ] via cell phone. A voice mail message on October 4, 2005 at 10:59 am, revealed a female voice who identified herself as [redacted] who requested [ ] to call her back reference the police questioning. [ ] provided the incoming telephone number as [ ] stated she inadvertently told [ ] about the police investigation because [ ] had called her to tell her about how she just received a rental car from Jeff Epstein. [ ] had called her to tell her that she was given a rental car, a 2005 Silver Nissan Sentra, to utilize to visit family and visit Epstein. [ ] asked her what was going on at the house that the police would be asking questions. [ ] stated [ ] then called Jeff and [redacted] and asked what was going on reference the ongoing police investigation. According to [ ] [redacted] has since then been trying to contact her to ask about the police questions. I instructed [ ] not to contact [redacted] and do not provide any more information to [ ] as she would notify Jeff Epstein and [redacted] what was transpiring.

On October4, 2005, I made telephone contact with [ ] who had left several messages for me to contact her. During the message, she advised she was not completely truthful when we met in person but would like to speak with me to advise what had happened. She further advised she did not want to speak of this incident in front of her mother. At approximately 3:48 pm I made telephone contact with [ ] During a taped recorded statement [ ] stated the following: approximately a year ago, when she was sixteen years of age, [redacted] took her to Epstein's house twice. She knows [redacted] because they both attend [ ] The first time she went, [redacted] drove to the house. They entered through the kitchen area where she was

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introduced to [redacted] and Epstein. She was taken upstairs to a bedroom by [redacted] who set the room up with a massage bed and brought out the oils to use. Epstein then entered the room wearing a towel. He laid on the table and picked out a lotion for [redacted] to rub on him. At one point during the massage he tried to remove her shirt, at which point she became very upset and discontinued the massage. Both [redacted] and Epstein had a verbal disagreement, at which time she left without being paid. She got with [redacted] who was sitting in the kitchen and told her "let's go." [redacted] advised she received no money for that day. [redacted] also said that [redacted] had told her if she was uncomfortable with what was going on, to let him know and he'll stop. She knew that the more you do the more you get paid. [redacted] advised that several weeks later she agreed to be taken a second time by [redacted]. Once they arrived at the residence, [redacted] sat in the kitchen and [redacted] took her upstairs to the master bedroom again. [redacted] set the room up with a massage bed and brought out the oils to use. Epstein then entered the room wearing a towel. He laid on the table and picked out a lotion for [redacted] to rub on him. At one point during the massage he tried to touch her buttocks. As [redacted] was wearing tight jeans and had a tight belt on Epstein was unable to touch her buttocks. Epstein then rolled onto his back during the massage and then attempted to touch her breasts [redacted] then became upset again and told Epstein she didn't want to be touched. [redacted] discontinued the massage and was paid $200.00. [redacted] then went downstairs where [redacted] was waiting for her. She told [redacted] she wanted to leave. [redacted] said she never returned to the house. [redacted] stated she is aware that her friend, [redacted] was also at the house and had a problem with Epstein. b6 b7C

I later researched [redacted] dob [redacted], and met with her at her residence. During a sworn taped statement, [redacted] stated the following: on or about November 2004, she was approached at [redacted] by [redacted], a fellow student. [redacted] asked [redacted] if she wanted to make money. She agreed and was told she would provide a massage to wealthy man in Palm Beach. [redacted] picked her up and drove her to a house in Palm Beach. She was brought into the kitchen area of the house. She further stated that fellow [redacted] students [redacted] and [redacted] came with them. They were brought into the kitchen where she was introduced to Epstein and other females. [redacted] stated she was introduced to a female helper of Epstein, the female was described as white female (unknown name), with blond hair. She stated that the assistant was familiar with [redacted] The assistant brought her upstairs into a master bedroom area. The assistant set up the massage table and put out lotions to be used. She told [redacted] Epstein would be available in a minute. Epstein entered the room wearing only a towel. Epstein removed his towel, and laid naked on the massage table and picked a lotion to rub on his thighs and back. [redacted] further stated during the massage, Epstein asked her to remove her clothes. She complied and removed her pants and blouse. [redacted] didn't remember if she had removed her bra but feels that she did. [redacted] was certain that she stayed in her thong underwear. [redacted] continued the massage and at one point she climbed onto the massage

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table, straddling Epstein to massage his back. While doing this her buttocks were touching Epsteins. [redacted] was instructed to return to the ground at which time Epstein turned to have his chest rubbed. [redacted] advised she was sure he was masturbating based on his hand movements going up and down on his penis area. [redacted] did not want to look at his penis area because she was uncomfortable. Epstein removed a large white vibrator which was next to the massage table and turned it on. [redacted] stated Epstein began rubbing the vibrator over her thong underwear on her vaginal area. Shortly thereafter, Epstein ejaculated and removed himself from the table. He walked over to where the shower was and opened the glass door. She waited as he was taking a shower in her direct view. When I asked [redacted] how old she was when this occurred, she stated she had just turned seventeen. At the conclusion of the shower, [redacted] was paid either $350.00 or $400.00. She stated she wasn't sure, but knows it was close to $400.00. [redacted] stated she never returned to provide a massage for Epstein.

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At approximately 2:10 pm, Det Dawson and I met with [redacted], dob [redacted] at her residence. As [redacted] was only seventeen years of age, I had notified her mother, that she would be interviewed reference an ongoing investigation in Palm Beach. I assured her that her daughter was not a suspect. I explained the possibility of her being either a witness or victim. Mrs [redacted] advised she wanted [redacted] to cooperate and consented to the interview.

During a sworn taped statement, [redacted] stated the following: at the age of sixteen, during the month of September 2004, she was approached by [redacted] for a chance to make money. [redacted] was friends with associates of [redacted] and knew the same people. [redacted] had been previously told by her friends from [redacted] what [redacted] did for Epstein. [redacted] called a person known to [redacted] as [redacted] and scheduled the appointment. [redacted] picked [redacted] up and drove her to Palm Beach to a street called "Brillo Way". They drove to the end of the street and entered a large driveway. They entered the kitchen area of the house and met with Epstein. [redacted] was introduced to Jeff Epstein. [redacted] led [redacted] upstairs to the main bedroom area and set up the room with a massage table and set out the oils. [redacted] stated that while going up the stairs and into the bedroom she observed numerous photographs of naked young girls. [redacted] dimmed the lights and turned on soft music. [redacted] exited the room and Epstein entered the room wearing only a towel. Epstein picked oils and instructed her to rub his legs, under his buttocks, back and chest area. Epstein asked her to get comfortable. [redacted] advised she did not remove her clothes. She was wearing tight jeans and a cropped tank top exposing her belly area. During the massage, Epstein removed his towel and laid on the massage table naked. As [redacted] rubbed Epstein's chest area, he attempted to reach down her pants to touch her buttocks area however was unable to due so due to the tightness of the jeans and a tight belt. [redacted] advised Epstein began to masturbate as she rubbed his chest. Epstein moaned as she rubbed his chest. She observed he was continuing to masturbate and

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attempted to reach up her tank top and touch her breasts. [redacted] pulled back and Epstein stopped, however he kept masturbating until he climaxed. He cleaned himself with the towel he was previously wearing. [redacted] was paid $200.00 for the massage and left the area. She met with [redacted] who was waiting in the kitchen area and left the house. b6 b7C

[redacted] then explained she never provided another massage for Epstein. She did however, go to the house with [redacted] and [redacted] as they took another friend of [redacted] s. [redacted] advised she was present when [redacted] went to work for Epstein. She advised she rode over and sat in the kitchen area with [redacted] to wait for [redacted] advised while they waited for [redacted] the house chef prepared lunch for them as it was almost lunchtime when they went. When [redacted] was finished with the massage they left the area. I asked [redacted] if [redacted] ever told her what would be expected when she provided a massage. [redacted] stated yes, [redacted] told her that a massage would be expected, possibly naked and possibly some touching involved. [redacted] has no formal training in providing massages. [redacted] spoke about a third and last time she went to Epstein's house. [redacted] drove another girl, [redacted] (sixteen years of age) who is [redacted] friend, to Epstein's house. [redacted] stated [redacted] knew that [redacted] had made money massaging Epstein and wanted to make money herself. [redacted] took them in the kitchen area of the house and introduced [redacted] to [redacted] took [redacted] upstairs to the main bedroom. [redacted] advised she doesn't know what happened as [redacted] did not speak about what happened in the room. [redacted] received $100.00 from [redacted] for going with her to Epstein's house and recommending [redacted]

On October 6, 2005, at 11:45 am, I met with [redacted], dob [redacted], at [redacted] and explained to her why we there to interview her. She advised she was aware of the ongoing investigation. [redacted] stated she had previously spoken with [redacted] who told her she was interviewed by detectives. During a sworn taped statement [redacted] stated she knew that [redacted] worked for Jeff Epstein in Palm Beach. [redacted] advised she originally had been taken to the Epstein house by [redacted], whom she met when they both attended [redacted]. She began going to the house when she was sixteen years of age and stated she had been there a lot of times to provide massages over the past two years. I asked her if she had formal training in providing massages, which [redacted] stated she had not. [redacted] advised she was told what was expected of her by providing massages and she would have to remove clothing but if she felt uncomfortable just to say so and Epstein would stop pushing the issue. [redacted] began providing massages and advised she kept her clothes on. She considered Epstein a pervert and he kept pushing to go further and further. [redacted] explained she would keep telling him she had a boyfriend and would not be right to her boyfriend. It wasn't until recently that [redacted] began removing her clothes and staying in her thong underwear to provide a massage. [redacted] explained

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Epstein wanted to be rubbed on his back and recently he began turning over and have her rub his chest as he masturbated. He would try to touch her breasts as she rubbed his chest. [redacted] stated "Jeff would try to get away with more and more on each massage". [redacted] stated Epstein would try to touch her more and on one occasion he attempted to use a massager/vibrator on her. [redacted] drove [redacted] to the house for the original massage. [redacted] left [redacted] her cell phone number and every time Epstein would come into town, [redacted] would call her for an appointment to "work". Each time she went, [redacted] would meet her at the kitchen door area. She would bring her upstairs and prepare the massage table. [redacted] advised Epstein would ask her questions about herself. Epstein knew she was a soccer player and would be attending [redacted] I asked [redacted] if Epstein knew her real age. [redacted] stated Epstein did and didn't care. The most recent massage she provided was on October 1, 2005. During the massage, she asked Epstein if she could borrow one of his vehicles to visit her family and boyfriend in Orlando, Florida. Epstein had told her she could borrow one of his vehicles but later stated he would rent her a car. She continued with the massage as Epstein grabbed her buttocks and caressed the buttocks cheeks. I asked [redacted] if she was wearing undergarments to which she replied her thong underwear. Once he tried to touch her breasts, she would pull away from him and he would stop. [redacted] was asked if he ever used a vibrator on her. [redacted] was aware of the vibrator but advised she never would allow him to use the vibrator on her. She described the vibrator as the large white vibrator with a huge head on the tip of the vibrator. She stated he kept the vibrator in a closet near the massage table.

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[redacted] stated that on October 3, 2005, she was contacted by Epstein's assistant, [redacted], who informed her that Jeff Epstein had rented her a new Nissan Sentra and she should come by the house to pick it up. [redacted] informed [redacted] she would have the car for a month. [redacted] stated Epstein knew her car was not working properly and that she had missed appointments in the past because of her car being inoperable. [redacted] explained the car is currently parked next to the [redacted] Gym field. I asked her if she ever took any one to the house. [redacted] explained she took [redacted] a friend of hers who attended [redacted], who has relocated to Orlando to attend college. I asked if she ever allowed another female in the room. [redacted] advised no one was brought into the room with her.

At the conclusion of the interview, Det Dawson and I went to the gym area of [redacted] and located the Silver Nissan Sentra bearing Florida tag X98-APM . The vehicle is registered to Dollar Rent a Car out of the Palm Beach International Airport. The vehicle was rented by Janusz Banasiack, later learned to be Epstein's houseman, and paid with Epstein's credit card.

On September 11, 2005, w/f [redacted], dob [redacted] was arrested by the Palm Beach Police Department

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for misdemeanor possession of marijuana. During the arrest [redacted] told the arresting officer that she had information about sexual activity taking place at the residence of Jeffrey Epstein. Additionally, during the ongoing trash pulls from Epstein's residence, discarded papers were found which contained [redacted] name and cell phone number.

On October, 11, 2005, Det Dawson and I met with [redacted] and obtained a sworn taped statement. [redacted] explained she had been going to Epstein's house since 2002, when she was sixteen years of age. Since then she has gone to the house hundreds of times. [redacted] stated she became his "number one girl." She explained that on her first visit she was brought to the house by fellow [redacted] classmate, [redacted] said she was brought through the kitchen area where she met [redacted] for the first time. [redacted] was led to the master bedroom, Epstein s room. [redacted] explained that as she was walking up the stairs she observed several photographs of naked women along the walls and tables of the house. [redacted] further explained that she was brought into the bedroom, where [redacted] prepared the room by setting up the massage table and provided the oils for her to rub on Epstein. [redacted] explained she remembered the steam room area, which contained two large showers. Epstein entered the room from the steam room area and introduced himself. Epstein lay on the table and told her to get comfortable. [redacted] removed her skirt and kept her shirt on. Epstein then instructed her to remove her shirt. [redacted] removed her shirt and remembered she was not wearing a bra. [redacted] stated she provided the massage wearing only her panties. She continued rubbing his legs, thighs and feet. [redacted] advised he turned over onto his back. Epstein touched her breasts and began to masturbate. Epstein ejaculated which meant the massage was over. At the conclusion of the massage, [redacted] was paid $200.00. They walked together downstairs where [redacted] and [redacted] were waiting. [redacted] stated [redacted] received an unknown amount of money for taking her to Epstein. Epstein instructed to leave her cellular telephone number so that he could contact her when he is in town.

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[redacted] stated that during her many visits a routine was established between her and Epstein. She would enter the house and get naked in the bedroom. She would then start with a back massage. Epstein would roll on to his back and allow her to massage his chest area. [redacted] stated Epstein would then began to masturbate himself and at the same time would insert his fingers in her vagina and masturbate her with his fingers. [redacted] explained Epstein would continue this process until he ejaculated. He would then utilize a vibrator/massager on her vagina until [redacted] climaxed. [redacted] advised that during her frequent visits, Epstein asked for her real age, [redacted] stated she was sixteen. Epstein advised her not to tell anyone her real age. [redacted] advised that things escalated within the home as Epstein would instruct and pay [redacted] to have intercourse with his female friend, [redacted]. [redacted] explained the intercourse included using strap on dildos, large rubber penis' and other devices that Epstein had at his disposal. Epstein would watch them have intercourse and masturbate himself. Occasionally, Epstein would then join in

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The foregoing instrument was sworn to or affirmed before me this 1st day of May, 2006 by Det Joe Recarey, who is personally known to me.

State of Florida
County of Palm Beach

Signature/Arresting Officer

Signature of Police Officer (F.S.S. 117.10)

Date: 05/01/2006

during the female on female intercourse and provide oral sex to both [redacted] and [redacted] This occurred during the time [redacted] was sixteen years of age.

[redacted] advised this continued to escalate during two years. The routine became familiar to [redacted] Epstein's assistant [redacted] would telephone her every time Epstein was in the Town of Palm Beach and would place appointments for her to visit and work for Epstein. Each time something new was introduced, additional monies were produced and offered for [redacted] to allow the acts to happen. [redacted] consented to perform all these acts but was adamant that there was an understanding with Epstein that no vaginal penetration would occur with his penis. [redacted] explained that Epstein's penis was deformed. [redacted] explained that his penis was oval shaped. [redacted] claimed when Epstein's penis was erect, it was thick toward the bottom but was thin and small toward the head portion. [redacted] called Epstein's penis "egg-shaped." [redacted] stated Epstein would photograph [redacted] and her naked and having sex and proudly display the photographs within the home. [redacted] stated during one visit to Epstein's house in which she provided a massage to Epstein, his female friend, [redacted], was also present. [redacted] provided the massage in which [redacted] and her would fondle each others breasts and kiss for Epstein to enjoy. Towards the end of this massage, Epstein grabbed [redacted] and turned her over onto her stomach on the massage table and forcibly inserted his penis into her vagina. [redacted] stated Epstein began to pump his penis in her vagina. [redacted] became upset over this. She said her head was being held against the table forcibly, as he continued to pump inside her. She screamed "No!" and Epstein stopped. She told him that she did not want to have his penis inside of her. Epstein did not ejaculate inside of her and apologized for his actions and subsequently paid her a thousand dollars for that visit. [redacted] stated she knows he still displays her photographs through out the house.

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On October 12, 2005, Det Dawson and I met with [redacted], dob [redacted] who stated during a sworn taped statement, that nothing happened between her and Epstein. [redacted] appeared nervous during the interview. I assured her that I have spoken with other people who advised differently. [redacted] stated on several occasions she provided a massage to Epstein. She stated she was brought to the Epstein house in March of 2005. [redacted] a classmate at [redacted], approached her and asked her if she wanted to "work". [redacted] made the arrangements with [redacted] Epstein's assistant. [redacted], who has no formal training in providing massages, stated she provided a massage, fully clothed for $200.00 . As I sensed hesitancy in her answers, I asked [redacted] if she had been contacted by anyone from Epstein's organizations or his house. [redacted] stated she was interviewed already by a private investigator for Epstein. He identified himself as "Paul" and inquired about the police investigation, and left his telephone number [redacted] for additional contact. [redacted] provided no additional information, as it appeared her responses were almost scripted.

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Date: 05/01/2006

Probable Cause Affidavit

Palm Beach Police Department

Agency ORI# FLO 500600

On November 6, 2005, at approximately 3:30 pm, I met with [redacted] dob [redacted], at the Palm Beach Police Department. [redacted] was identified as a potential witness/victim through information obtained during the trash pulls. During the sworn taped statement, [redacted] advised she was at Jeffrey Epstein's house one time, approximately two months ago. She was approached by a girl, [redacted] who was dating [redacted] roommate, for an opportunity to make some quick money. [redacted] advised she needed to make some quick cash to make the rent that month. She agreed to go to the house. She had been told by [redacted] that the massage would have to be done in her underwear. She advised [redacted] drove with her and brought her into the house. They walked into the kitchen area, and took the stairs upstairs. [redacted] further stated she was brought into a master bedroom area. She advised she recalled seeing portraits of naked women throughout the room. A massage table was already out near the sauna/shower area in the master bedroom. Epstein entered the room wearing only a towel and introduced himself as "Jeff." At Epstein's direction, [redacted] and [redacted] removed their clothing down to their panties, Epstein laid on his stomach area and they provided a massage on his legs and feet area. I asked [redacted] if she had any formal massage training and she replied "no." [redacted] advised she was topless and the panties she wore were the boy shorts lace panties. She and [redacted] continued the massage until the last ten minutes of the massage, Epstein, told [redacted] to leave the room so that [redacted] could finish the massage. [redacted] got dressed, and left the room as Epstein turned over onto his back. Epstein then removed the towel and laid naked . Epstein requested that [redacted] rub his chest area. [redacted] stated as she did this, Epstein, began masturbating. [redacted] stated Epstein pulled down her boy short panties, and he produced a large white vibrator with a large head. She stated it was within his reach in a drawer in his master bathroom. He rubbed the vibrator on her vaginal area. [redacted] advised he never penetrated her vagina with the vibrator. He continued to rub her vagina with the vibrator as he continued to masturbate. [redacted] stated she was very uncomfortable during the incident but knew it was almost over. Epstein climaxed and started to remove himself from the table. He wiped himself with the towel he had on previously and went into the shower area. Thomas got dressed and met with [redacted] in the kitchen area. Epstein came into the kitchen and provided [redacted] $200.00 for bringing [redacted] and paid $200.00 to [redacted] for providing the massage. [redacted] was told to leave her telephone number with [redacted] for future contact. [redacted] provided her cellular telephone number. [redacted] was asked if she was recently contacted about this investigation by anyone from the Epstein organization. She replied she was called but it was for work. She stated she was called by [redacted] for her to return to "work" for Epstein. [redacted] stated "work" is the term used by [redacted] to provide the massages and other things. [redacted] advised she declined as she was not comfortable in providing that type of "work."

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On November 7, 2005, Det Sandman and I met with [redacted], dob [redacted] During a sworn taped statement, [redacted] stated she met Jeffrey Epstein through [redacted] when they were still

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HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018906

attending [redacted] would approach females who wished to work for Epstein. [redacted] stated she was offered to work for Epstein but declined. [redacted] explained that "work" means give massages. She was asked about any formal training in providing massages which she said "no." [redacted] said she accompanied [redacted] and other females who were taken to Epstein's house to provide massages. [redacted] further stated she had been to the house approximately 4 or 5 times in the past year. She accompanied [redacted] with [redacted] Each time the girls were taken over, they were previously told they would have to provide a massage, possibly naked. They were also told that should Epstein require them to do anything extra, and they were not comfortable just to tell him and he would stop. [redacted] stated [redacted] received $200.00 for each girl she brought over to massage Jeffrey Epstein. When I asked which girl appeared to be the youngest, she replied, [redacted] who was really young, fifteen years old at the most. [redacted] further stated each time she went to the house, she sat in the kitchen and waited with [redacted] until the massage was over. She further stated that the cook would make lunch or a snack for them as they waited. I asked her if there was anything that caught her attention within the home. [redacted] stated there were a lot of naked girls in photographs throughout the house.

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On November 8, 2005, at approximately 2:00pm , I met with [redacted], dob [redacted] at the Palm Beach Police Department. During a sworn taped statement, [redacted] stated she had met Epstein approximately two years ago when she was first approached by [redacted], a classmate at [redacted] [redacted] approached her about working for Epstein and providing a massage to him for $200.00. [redacted] had made the arrangements however was unable to take her the day the arrangements were made. [redacted] had [redacted] take [redacted] also attended [redacted] and was familiar with Epstein. [redacted] recalled she was brought there and entered through the back kitchen door. She had met with an assistant [redacted] and another assistant [redacted]. [redacted] brought her upstairs as she observed several photographs of naked females throughout the house. [redacted] stated Epstein came in the room, wearing only a towel, and laid on the table. [redacted] stated he picked out the oils he wanted her to use and requested she remove her clothing to provide the massage. [redacted] stated that on the first massage she provided she did not remove her clothing. [redacted] stated she had returned several times after that. Each time she returned it was more than a massage. Epstein would walk into the master bedroom/bathroom area wearing only a towel. He would masturbate as she provided a massage. [redacted] stated she was unsure if he climaxed as he masturbated under the towel. Additionally, she never looked below his waist. She claimed that Epstein would convince her to remove her clothes. She eventually removed her clothes and stayed in her thong panties. On occasion, Epstein would use a massager/vibrator, which she described as white in color and a large head. Epstein would rub the vibrator/massager on her vaginal area as he would masturbate. [redacted] stated she had been to the house

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numerous times. [redacted] added she has no formal training in providing a massage. [redacted] stated she brought two females during her visits to provide massages. [redacted] stated she brought a girl named [redacted] and [redacted] from [redacted] stated she received $200.00 for each girl she brought. b6 b7C

On November 8, 2005, I met with [redacted] W/F, [redacted], at the Palm Beach Police Department. During a sworn taped statement, [redacted] stated she had met Jeffrey Epstein approximately one year ago. She was approached by a subject known to her as [redacted] had asked her if she wanted to make money providing massages to Epstein. [redacted] had heard that several girls from [redacted] were doing this and making money. She agreed and was taken to the house by [redacted] had introduced her to [redacted] and Epstein and brought her upstairs to a master bedroom where a massage table was prepared and the proper oils were selected. [redacted] left the room and waited downstairs for her. [redacted] stated Epstein entered the room wearing a towel and laid on his stomach. She provided a massage wearing only her thong panties. [redacted] advised Epstein had masturbated every time she provided a massage. She stated Epstein continued to masturbate until he climaxed. Once that occurred the massage was over. She felt the whole situation was weird but she advised she was paid $200.00 for providing the massage. She also stated [redacted] was paid $200.00 by Epstein for bringing [redacted] stated she had gone a total of 15 times to Epstein's residence to provide a massage and things had escalated from just providing a massage. Epstein began touching her on her buttocks and grabbed her closer to him as he masturbated. Epstein also grabbed her breasts and fondled her breasts with his hands as she provided the massage. [redacted] stated on one occasion, while she was only seventeen years of age, he offered extra monies to have vaginal intercourse. She stated this all occurred on the massage table. [redacted] stated Epstein penetrated her vagina with his penis and began having intercourse with her until he reached the point of climax. Epstein removed his penis from her vagina and climaxed onto the massage table. [redacted] received $350.00 for her massage. I asked her if she had any formal training in providing massages, [redacted] stated she did not. [redacted] continued to state on one other occasion, Epstein introduced his girlfriend, [redacted], into the massage. [redacted] was brought into room with [redacted] to provide a massage. Epstein had them kiss and fondle each other around the breasts and buttocks as they provided a massage to Epstein. Epstein, watched and masturbated as this occurred. On other occasions, Epstein, introduced the large white vibrator/massager in the massage. Epstein stroked the vibrator/massager on [redacted] vagina as she provided the massage.

On November 14, 2005, Det Sandman and I met with [redacted], dob [redacted]. During a sworn taped statement she advised she started going to the house approximately one year ago and has been there approximately five or six times [redacted] also stated she was sixteen years old when she first went to Epstein's house. On her first visit she was brought by a fellow student from [redacted] known to her

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as [redacted] stated [redacted] brought her into the house and she was introduced to [redacted]. [redacted] then brought her upstairs into a master bathroom, located within the bedroom. [redacted] stated she met Epstein in the bathroom. He laid on the table and picked the massage oils. She provided the massage as he laid naked on the massage bed. She stated she rubbed his calves and back area. Upon the end of the massage, Epstein removed himself from the massage table and paid her $300.00 for the massage. [redacted] said each subsequent time she went to the house, she was notified by [redacted] that Epstein was in town and would like her to "work". [redacted] stated she returned to the house and was again led upstairs by [redacted] She provided the massage, clothed. [redacted] was asked if she ever removed her clothing to provide a massage. [redacted] stated it was not until the third time that she went that she removed her clothing. [redacted] stated she was notified by [redacted] that Epstein wanted her to come to work. She arrived at the house and was led upstairs by [redacted] She started providing the massage when Epstein asked her to remove her clothing. [redacted] removed her pants, shirt and bra. She stayed in her thong panties and continued rubbing Epstein. Epstein turned over onto his back and she rubbed his chest area. [redacted] stated she knew he was masturbating himself as she providing the massage. [redacted] stated she believed he climaxed based on his breathing. She did not want to view either the climax or the fact that he was masturbating. [redacted] stated once the breathing relaxed he got up and told her to get dressed. She was paid $300.00 for her services. [redacted] stated on the last time she went to provide a massage, she was notified by [redacted] to come to the house and "work". [redacted] stated she was now dating her current boyfriend and did not feel comfortable going. She recalled it was approximately January 2005. She said she went, already thinking that this would be the last time. She went upstairs and went into the master bathroom. She met with Epstein, who was wearing only a towel, and laid onto the table. [redacted] stated Epstein caught her looking at the clock on several occasions. Epstein asked her if she was in a hurry. [redacted] stated her boyfriend was in the car waiting for her. [redacted] further stated that Epstein got upset as he wasn't enjoying the massage. She told him that she didn't want to continue and she would not be back. Epstein told her to leave as she was ruining his massage. [redacted] advised she had no formal training in providing any massages. [redacted] stated although she had a falling out with Epstein, she still received a Christmas bonus from Epstein. [redacted] stated she was wired money from Western Union for her Christmas bonus. Subpoena results from Western Union revealed money was sent from Jeffrey Epstein on December 23, 2004. [redacted] received $200.00 from Epstein for her Christmas bonus.

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On November 15, 2005, Det. Sandman and I met with [redacted], dob [redacted] During a sworn taped statement, [redacted] stated she met Jeffrey Epstein over a year ago. She was sixteen years of age and was approached by [redacted] a fellow [redacted] student, who informed her that she could make $200.00 providing a massage to Epstein. [redacted] had informed her that she would have to provide this

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massage topless. [redacted] made the arrangements with Epstein and his assistants and took [redacted] to the house. [redacted] stated [redacted] and she entered through a glass door that led into a kitchen. She was taken upstairs by [redacted] to a master bedroom. She recalled the master bathroom had a large pink couch, sauna and matching shower. Epstein entered into the room wearing only a towel. [redacted] and [redacted] removed their clothing remaining only in thong underwear. She further stated that Epstein laid on his chest on the table. The oils were selected on which ones to use. Both [redacted] and [redacted] provided the massage on his legs, back and feet. Forty minutes into the massage, Epstein turned over onto his back and requested [redacted] wait downstairs in the kitchen area for [redacted] Epstein instructed [redacted] to finish the massage. As [redacted] got dressed, [redacted] starting rubbing Epstein's chest. [redacted] left the room, and Epstein began masturbating as [redacted] rubbed Epstein's chest. [redacted] stated Epstein continued masturbating until he climaxed on the towel he was wearing. When asked if he had removed the towel she stated he turned the towel around so that the opening would allow him to expose himself. After he cleaned himself off with the towel he instructed [redacted] the massage was done and to get dressed and meet with him downstairs. [redacted] got dressed and met with Epstein in the kitchen area. She was paid $200.00 dollars for providing the massage. [redacted] stated she was aware that [redacted] also received monies for the same thing. The second time she went to the house she was again approached by [redacted] advised if she wanted to return to the house to provide another massage. [redacted] agreed and the arrangements were made by [redacted] for her to return to the house. [redacted] stated [redacted] drove her to the house and knocked on the same glass door which leads to the kitchen area. They were allowed entry into the house by one of the staff members. [redacted] led her upstairs to the master bedroom and master bathroom area. [redacted] left [redacted] this time to do the massage alone. Epstein entered the room again wearing only a towel. [redacted] began removing her clothing as she did the last time she was at the house. Epstein instructed her to get naked. He laid on the table onto his stomach as [redacted] began massaging his legs and back. As [redacted] finished with Epstein's back and legs, Epstein then turned over onto his back. [redacted] started to rub his chest and he began masturbating. As [redacted] rubbed his chest, Epstein leaned over and produced a massager/vibrator. He turned it on and began rubbing [redacted] vagina and masturbating himself at the same time. [redacted] stated she continued to rub his chest as this was occurring. She described the vibrator/massager as large grey with a large head. Epstein rubbed her vagina for approximately two to three minutes with the massager/vibrator. He then removed the vibrator from her vaginal area and concentrated on masturbating himself. [redacted] stated Epstein climaxed onto the towel again and informed her that the massage was done. [redacted] got dressed and met with [redacted] who was waiting in the kitchen area. She received $200.00 for the massage. [redacted] said she never returned to the house and had no desire to return to the house. [redacted] was asked if she received any formal massage training. She advised she had no formal training. [redacted] was asked if Epstein knew her real age. [redacted] stated he knew, as he asked her questions about herself and high school. He was aware she attended, and is still attending [redacted]

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During the course of the investigation a search warrant was executed at Jeffrey Epstein's home located at 358 El Brillo Way in Palm Beach. While in the home I observed the pink and green couch within the master bedroom area just as the girls previously mentioned. The stairway, which is located from the kitchen area to the master bedroom area, is lined with photos of naked young girls. Additionally, numerous photographs of naked young females, some of which appeared to be the girls I previously interviewed, were on display throughout the house. Also located in the house were various phone message books. The telephone message books have a duplicate copy (Carbon Copy) which, once a phone message is written into the book, the top copy is then torn on the perforated edge and the carbon copy is left in the book. First names of girls, dates and telephone numbers were on the copy of the messages. I recognized various numbers and names of girls that had already been interviewed. The body of the messages were time of the day that they called for confirmation of "work." Other names and telephone numbers were located in which the body of the messages were, "I have girls for him" or "I have 2 girls for him." These messages were taken by [redacted] who signed the bottom of the messages. During the execution of the warrant, I located a [redacted] transcript for [redacted] in Epstein's bedroom desk. This desk had stationary marked Jeffrey E Epstein. I located a wood colored armoire beside Epstein's bed that contained a bottle of "Joy Jelly," which is used to provide a warm massage. Several massage tables were located throughout the second floor of the residence, including a massage table found in Epstein's bedroom. On the first floor of the residence I found two covert cameras hidden within clocks. One was located in the garage and the other located in the library area on a shelf behind Epstein's desk. A computer was located which was believed to contain the images from the covert cameras. The computer's hard drive was reviewed which showed several images of [redacted] and other witnesses that have been interviewed. All of these images appeared to come from the camera positioned behind Epstein's desk. b6 b7C

On December 13, 2005, Det. Dawson and I met with [redacted], dob [redacted] During a sworn taped statement [redacted] stated that when she was sixteen years old she was taken to Epstein's house to provide a massage for money. [redacted] stated it was before Christmas last year (2004) when an associate [redacted] approached her and asked if she needed to make money for Christmas. [redacted] made arrangements to take [redacted] to the house and drove [redacted] to the house to "work." They were encountered by a white female with long blond hair. [redacted] was unable to remember the name of the white female with blond hair but knew she was Epstein's assistant. She was led upstairs by the white female who explained that there would be lotions out already and Epstein would choose the lotion he wanted her to use. She was led through a spiral staircase which led to a master bedroom and bathroom. The massage table was already set up in the bathroom. [redacted] described the bathroom as a large spacious bathroom with a steam room and shower beside it. [redacted] was introduced to Epstein who was on the phone when she entered the room. Epstein was wearing a white towel and laid on his stomach so that [redacted] may

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massage his feet and calves. [redacted] started the massage with the oils Epstein chose and rubbed his feet and calves. Epstein got off the phone and requested she massage his back as well. [redacted] began rubbing his back and got to the small of his back. During the rubbing of his back, Epstein asked her to get comfortable. He requested she remove her pants and shirt. [redacted] removed her shirt and pulled her pants off. [redacted] stayed in her bra and thong panties. As she finished massaging the small of Epstein's back, he then turned onto his back. Epstein instructed [redacted] to rub his chest and pinch his nipples. As she began to rub his chest, Epstein asked her questions about herself. [redacted] remembered telling him she attended [redacted] Epstein asked her if she was sexually active. Before [redacted] could answer, he also asked what sexual position does she enjoy. [redacted] stated she was shy and didn't like talking about those things. She continued rubbing his chest. Epstein reached up and unsnapped her bra from the front. [redacted] explained the bra she used had a front snapping device. Epstein rubbed her breasts and asked her if she like having her breasts rubbed. [redacted] said "no, I don't like that." Epstein then removed his towel and laid on the bed naked exposing his penis to [redacted] He began touching his penis and masturbated as he touched her breasts. [redacted] explained Epstein then touched her vaginal area by rubbing her vagina with his fingers on the outside of her thong panties. [redacted] tensed up and stated Epstein was aware that she was uncomfortable. [redacted] stated that Epstein said to her, "Relax, I'm not going inside." She further explained Epstein commented to her how beautiful and sexy she was. Epstein then moved her thong panties to one side and began stroking her clitoris. [redacted] said, "He commented how hard my clit was." He then inserted two fingers in her vagina and was stroking her within her vagina. She tried pulling back to pull out his fingers from within her vagina. Epstein removed his fingers from within her vagina and apologized for putting his fingers inside her. During this time, he kept his hand on her vaginal area and continued to rub her vagina. [redacted] stated he rubbed her really hard as he was masturbating. [redacted] said he climaxed onto the towel he had been previously wearing and got up from the table. Epstein told her there was $200.00 dollars for her on the dresser within the master bathroom. Epstein also told her that there was an additional $100.00 that was to be given to [redacted] for bringing her there to massage him. Epstein told her to leave her telephone number with his assistant as he wanted to see her again. Epstein stated his assistant would contact her to work again soon. I asked her if she ever received any formal massage training to which [redacted] stated she did not. [redacted] stated it was the only time she ever went to work for Jeff and knew what happened to her was wrong. She further stated that she had never been contacted for any additional work.

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On January 9, 2006, I located and interviewed another victim. [redacted] dob [redacted] was identified as a potential victim/witness from information obtained during trash pulls from Epstein's residence. [redacted] stated she met Epstein when she was fifteen years of age. She was approached by a friend from [redacted] to be taken to Jeffrey Epstein's house to work. She was originally told she would be able

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to model lingerie for a wealthy Palm Beacher. was taken to Epstein's house located on El Brillo Way. introduced to Jeffrey Epstein. Epstein had his personal chef prepare dinner for . At the conclusion of dinner, and Epstein brought upstairs into a master bedroom area. observed a large massage table with a sheet on it. Epstein entered through a door and exited wearing only a towel. informed that they were going to provide a massage on Epstein. asked why were they doing this instead of modeling lingerie. explained to that this was his routine and to rub his calves and feet. Epstein had told to get comfortable. removed her pants and blouse. stated she stayed only in panties as she did not wear a bra that evening. stated while rubbing his calves and feet, Epstein turned over onto his back. Epstein told to rub his chest and rub his nipples. stated that as she started rubbing his chest, Epstein began masturbating himself. Epstein touched her breasts and stroked her vagina with his fingers. Epstein continued to masturbate himself as he stroked her vagina. Epstein ejaculated on his towel and paid $200.00 for the massage. Epstein told that if she told anyone what happened at his house that bad things could happen. and were brought home by Epstein's houseman and was afraid that Epstein knew where she lived. stated that several days later she received a telephone call from who coordinated for to return to "work." returned to the house and was brought to Epstein's bedroom area by who prepared the room for the massage. Epstein entered the room wearing only a towel. Epstein had remove her clothing and provide the massage naked. began rubbing his feet and calves and Epstein turned over onto his back. Epstein rubbed her vagina with his fingers. Epstein began to masturbate himself with an upwards and downward motion on his penis. Epstein continued to touch her vagina with one hand and masturbate with the other hand. Once Epstein ejaculated onto the towel he was wearing, the massage was over. was paid $200.00 for the massage. Epstein again told not to speak of what happened at his house or bad things would happen. wanted to notify authorities however she was afraid of what would happen to either her or her family.

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During the course of the investigation, several subjects were identified as a potential witness/victim through information obtained during the trash pulls, physical surveillance and telephone message books retrieved from the search warrant. While conducting research on the subjects, I discovered that the females were age eighteen or older. Interviews were conducted on the consenting adults whose statements provided the same massage routine when they went to "work" for Epstein. The females would be notified by , and made appointments for the females to "work" for Epstein. The females would come to Epstein's house and were led upstairs, through a stairwell from the kitchen area, by to Epstein's bedroom. Epstein would then enter the room wearing only a towel, and ask them to get comfortable. The females would then provide the massage naked as Epstein would either touch their vaginas with his fingers and/or utilize the massager/vibrator on

The foregoing instrument was sworn to or affirmed before me this 1st day of May, 2006 by Det Joe Recarey, who is personally known to me.

State of Florida
County of Palm Beach

Signature/Arresting Officer

Signature of Police Officer (F.S.S. 117.10)

Date: 05/01/2006

their vaginal area. He would masturbate during the massage and upon his climaxing, the massage would end. The girls were then paid two or three hundred dollars for the massage.

On November 21, 2005 I interviewed Jose Alessi, a former houseman for Jeffrey Epstein. Alessi stated he was employed for eleven years with Mr. Epstein, from approximately 1993 through 2004. Alessi stated he was the house manager, driver and house maintenance person. It was his responsibility to prepare the house for Epstein s arrival. When asked about cooks or assistants, Alessi stated they traveled with Epstein on his private plane. I asked Mr. Alessi about the massages that have occurred at Epstein's home. Alessi stated Epstein receives three massages a day. Each masseuse that visited the house was different. Alessi stated that towards the end of his employment, the masseuses were younger and younger. When asked how young, Mr. Alessi stated they appeared to be sixteen or seventeen years of age at the most. The massages would occur in Epstein's bedroom or bathroom. He knew this because he often set up the massage tables. I asked if there were things going on other than a massage. Alessi stated that there were times towards the end of his employment that he would have to wash off a massager/vibrator and a long rubber penis, which were in the sink after the massage. Additionally, he stated the bed would almost always have to be made after the massage.

On January 4, 2006 I interviewed another former houseman, Mr Alfredo Rodriguez. During a sworn taped statement, Mr. Rodriguez stated he was employed by Jeffrey Epstein for approximately six months, from November 2004 through May of 2005. His responsibilities as house manager included being the butler, chauffeur, chef, houseman, run errands for Epstein and provide for Epstein's guests. I asked Rodriguez about masseuses coming to the house. Rodriguez stated Epstein would have two massages a day. Epstein would have one massage in the morning and one massage in the afternoon everyday he was in residence. Rodriguez stated he would be informed to expect someone and make them comfortable until either [redacted] or Epstein would meet with them. Rodriguez stated once the masseuses would arrive, he would allow them entry into the kitchen area and offer them something to drink or eat. They would then be encountered by either [redacted] or Epstein. They would be taken upstairs to provide the massage. I asked Rodriguez if any of the masseuses appeared young in age. Rodriguez stated the girls that would come appeared to be too young to be masseuses. He stated one time under Epstein's direction, he delivered a dozen roses to [redacted] for one of the girls that came to provide a massage. He knew the girls were still in high school and were of high school age. I asked Rodriguez about the massages. He felt there was a lot more going on than just massages. He would often clean Mr. Epstein's bedroom after the alleged massages and would discover massagers/vibrators and sex toys scattered on the floor. He also said he would wipe down the vibrators and sex toys and put them away in an armoire. He described the armoire as a small wood armoire which was on the wall close to Epstein's

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b7C

The foregoing instrument was sworn to or affirmed before me this 1st day of May, 2006 by Det Joe Recarey, who is personally known to me.

State of Florida
County of Palm Beach

Signature/Arresting Officer

Signature of Police Officer (F.S.S. 117.10)

Date: 05/01/2006

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018914

bed. On one occasion Epstein ordered Rodriguez to go to the Dollar rent a car and rent a car for the same girl he brought the roses to, so that she could drive her self to Epstein's house without incident. Rodriguez said the girl always needed rides to and from the house.

Rodriguez produced a green folder which contained documents, and a note with Mr. Epstein's stationary with direction to deliver a bucket of roses to [redacted] after [redacted] high school drama performance. Also in that same note was direction to rent a car for [redacted] and direction to extend the rental contract. b6 b7C

During the course of the investigation, subpoenas were obtained for cell phone and home phone records from several victims and witnesses along with the cell phone records of [redacted]. An analysis of these records was conducted which found numerous telephone calls were made between [redacted] and the victims. These records indicate the dates the calls were made are consistent with the dates and times they victims/witnesses stated they were contacted. Specifically, The phone records showed [redacted] called [redacted] during the exact times and dates when victim [redacted] advised the incident occurred. [redacted] also coordinated the encounters with [redacted] during the time frame the girls stated they occurred.

Pursuant to a lawful subpoena I obtained Epstein's private plane records for 2005 from Jet Aviation. The plane records show arrival and departure of Epstein's plane at Palm Beach International airport. These records were compared to the cell phone records of [redacted] This comparison found that all the phone calls [redacted] made to [redacted] and the victims were made in the days just prior to their arrival or during the time Epstein was in Palm Beach.

Therefore, as Jeffrey Epstein, who at the time of these incidents was fifty one years of age, did have vaginal intercourse either with his penis or digitally with [redacted] who were minors at the time this occurred, there is sufficient probable cause to charge Jeffrey Epstein with four counts of Unlawful Sexual Activity with a Minor, in violation of Florida State Statute 794.05(1), a second degree felony. As Epstein, who at the time of the incident was fifty two years of age, did use a vibrator on the external vaginal area of [redacted] a fourteen year old minor, there is sufficient probable cause to charge him with Lewd and Lascivious Molestation, in violation of Florida State Statute 800.04 (5), a second degree felony. b6 b7C

The foregoing instrument was sworn to or affirmed before me this 1st day of May, 2006 by Det Joe Recarey, who is personally known to me.

State of Florida
County of Palm Beach

Signature/Arresting Officer

Signature of Police Officer (F.S.S. 117.10)

Date: 05/01/2006

FD-350 (Rev. 5-8-81)

Mount Clipping in Space Below)

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)
1B, 6B / The Palm Beach Post
West Palm Beach, FL

Date: 07/24/2006
Edition:

Title: Mystery money man faces soliciting charge

Character
or
Classification 31E-MM-108062
Submitting Office: MM

Indexing:

Mystery money man faces soliciting charge

By NICOLE JANOK
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

A part-time Palm Beacher who has socialized with Donald Trump, Bill Clinton and Kevin Spacey was jailed early Sunday with accused drug dealers, drunken drivers and wife beaters after he was charged with soliciting a prostitute.

Manhattan money manager Jeffrey Epstein, 53, was picked up at his home on El Brillo Way at 1:45 a.m. He was released hours later on $3,000 bond.

Epstein was indicted last week by a state grand jury, according to state attorney's spokesman Mike Edmondson. Despite Epstein's arrest, the indictment containing the allegations remained sealed Sunday and Edmondson provided no details.

Unlike most accused johns, Epstein was charged with a third-degree felony instead of a misdemeanor. Under state law, a solicitation charge usually is elevated to a more-serious felony when the defendant has at least two solicitation convictions.

However, checks of court records here and in New York Sunday turned up no such convictions.

Epstein could not be reached. Edmondson said he was being represented by West Palm Beach attorney Jack Goldberg, who declined comment.

Epstein is the president of J Epstein & Co., a money management company based in Manhattan that caters to ultra-wealthy clientele, according to pub-

See SOLICITING, 6B ▶

Jeffrey Epstein
Indictment related to prostitution.

'Mysterious billionaire' has been on probation

▶ SOLICITING *from 1B*

lished reports. National magazines have described him as a "mysterious billionaire" who lives in a 45,000-square-foot New York City mansion.

He has been in trouble before. In 1993, he and two other defendants were charged in federal court with three counts of postal larceny and theft and one count of property theft. Epstein plead guilty to a single charge of conspiring to steal U.S. Treasury checks from residential mailboxes and received 5 years' probation. The remaining charges were dropped.

Since then, Epstein's name has turned up in New York City's tabloids. *The New York Post* noted he flew President Clinton and Kevin Spacey to Africa on his private Boeing 727. In 2003, the paper dubbed him one of the Big Apple's "top studs."

In 2004, Epstein bid against Trump for a 43,000-square foot Palm Beach estate once owned by healthcare magnate Abe Gosman. Trump topped Epstein with a $41.35 million bid.

Staff Researcher Angelica Cortez contributed to this story.

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31E-MM-108062-4

Indictment: Billionaire solicited 3 times

Palm Beach police will report today about their prostitution probe of the money manager.

By LARRY KELLER
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Billionaire money manager and Palm Beach part-time resident Jeffrey Epstein solicited or procured prostitutes three or more times between Aug. 1 and Oct. 31 of last year, according to an indictment charging him with felony solicitation of prostitution.

Epstein, 53, was booked at the Palm Beach County jail at 1:45 a.m. Sunday. He was released on $3,000 bond.

Epstein's case is unusual in that suspected prostitution johns are usually charged with a misdemeanor, and even a felony charge is typically made in a criminal information — an alternative to an indictment charging a person with the commission of a crime.

Epstein

His attorney, Jack Goldberger, declined to discuss the charge.

State attorney's office spokesman Mike Edmondson also had little to say.

"Generally speaking, there is a case that has a number of different aspects to it," Edmondson said of a prostitution-related charge being submitted to a grand jury. "We first became aware of the case months ago by Palm Beach police."

Prosecutors and police worked together to bring the case to the grand jury, he said.

Palm Beach police confirmed that and said the department will release a report today regarding its investigation.

Epstein has owned a five-bedroom, 7½-bath, 7,234-square-foot home with a pool and a boat dock on the Intracoastal Waterway since 1990, according to property records. A man answering the door there Monday said that Epstein wasn't home. A Cadillac Escalade registered to him was parked in the driveway, which is flanked by two massive gargoyles.

Epstein sued Property Appraiser Gary Nikolits in 2001, contending that the assessment of his home exceeded its fair market value. He dismissed his lawsuit in December 2002.

A profile of Epstein in *Vanity Fair* magazine said he owns what are believed to be the largest private homes in Manhattan — 51,000 square feet — and in New Mexico — a 7,500-acre ranch. Those are in addition to his 70-acre island in the U.S. Virgin Islands and fleet of aircraft.

Epstein's friends and admirers, according to the magazine, include prominent businessmen, academics and scientists and famed Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz.

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FD-350 (Rev. 5-8-81)

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(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)
4B / The Palm Beach Post
West Palm Beach, FL
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Title: Indictment: Billionaire solicited 3 times

Character
or
Classification: 31E-MM-108062
Submitting Office: MM

Indexing:

31E-MM-108062-5

FD-350 (Rev. 5-8-81)

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(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)
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West Palm Beach, FL
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Edition:

Title: After long probe, billionaire faces solicitation charges
Character or Classification: 31E-MM-108062
Submitting Office: MM

Indexing:

After long probe, billionaire faces solicitation charge

By LARRY KELLER
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Palm Beach billionaire Jeffrey Epstein paid to have underage girls and young women brought to his home, where he received massages and sometimes sex, according to an investigation by the Palm Beach Police Department.

Epstein

Palm Beach police spent months sifting through Epstein's trash and watching his waterfront home and Palm Beach International Airport to keep tabs on his private jet. An indictment charging Epstein, 53, was unsealed Monday, charging him with one count of felony solicitation of prostitution.

Palm Beach police thought there was probable cause to charge Epstein with unlawful sex acts with a minor and lewd and lascivious molestation.

Police Chief Michael Reiter was so angry with State Attorney Barry Krischer's handling of the case that he wrote a memo

See EPSTEIN, 5B ▶

31E-MM-108062-6

Police kept watch on home, airport, sifted through trash

▶ EPSTEIN *from 1B*

suggesting the county's top prosecutor disqualify himself.

"I must urge you to examine the unusual course that your office's handling of this matter has taken and consider good and sufficient reason exists to require your disqualification from the prosecution of these cases," Reiter wrote in a May 1 memo to Krischer.

While not commenting specifically on the Epstein case, Mike Edmondson, spokesman for the state attorney, said his office presents cases other than murders to a grand jury when there are questions about witnesses' credibility and their ability to testify.

By the nature of their jobs, police officers look at evidence from a "one-sided perspective," Edmondson said. "A prosecutor has to look at it in a much broader fashion," weighing the veracity of witnesses and how they may fare under defense attorneys' questioning, he said.

Epstein's attorney, Jack Goldberger, said his client committed no crimes.

"The reports and statements in question refer to false accusations that were not charged because the Palm Beach County state attorney questioned the credibility of the witnesses," Goldberger said. A county grand jury "found the allegations wholly unsubstantiated and not credible," and that's why his client was not charged with sexual activity with minors, he said.

Goldberger said Epstein passed a lie detector test administered by a reputable polygraph examiner in which he said he did not know the girls were minors. Also, a search warrant served on Epstein's home found no evidence to corroborate the girls' allegations, Goldberger said.

According to police documents:

- A Palm Beach Community College student said she gave Epstein a massage in the nude, then brought him six girls, ages 14 to 16, for massage and sex-tinged sessions at his home.
- A 27-year-old woman who worked as Epstein's personal assistant also facilitated the liaisons, phoning the PBCC student to arrange for girls when Epstein was coming to town. And she escorted the girls upstairs when they arrived, putting fresh sheets on a massage table and placing massage oils nearby.
- Police took sworn statements from five alleged victims and 17 witnesses. They contend that on three occasions, Epstein had sex with the girls.

The chief's letter

See the letter Palm Beach Police Chief Michael Reiter wrote to State Attorney Barry Krischer on the Epstein case.

PalmBeachPost.com

A money manager for the ultra-rich, Epstein was named one of New York's most eligible bachelors in 2003 by *The New York Post*. He reportedly hobnobs with the likes of former President Clinton, former Harvard University President Lawrence Summers and Donald Trump, and has lavish homes in Manhattan, New Mexico and the Virgin Islands.

He has contributed tens of thousands of dollars to Democratic Party candidates and organizations, including Sen. John Kerry's presidential bid, and the Senate campaigns of Joe Lieberman, Hillary Clinton, Christopher Dodd and Charles Schumer.

Goldberger is one of five attorneys Epstein has retained since he became the subject of an investigation, Edmondson said. Among the others: Alan Dershowitz, the well-known Harvard law professor and author, who is a friend of Epstein. Dershowitz could not be reached for comment.

Police said the woman who enlisted young girls for Epstein was Haley Robson, 20, of Royal Palm Beach. Robson has worked at an Olive Garden restaurant in Wellington and said she was a journalism major at Palm Beach Community College when she was questioned by police last October. She has an unlisted phone number and could not be reached for comment.

Robson said she met Epstein when, at age 17, a friend asked her if she would like to make money giving him a massage. She said she was driven to his five-bedroom, 7½-bath home on the Intracoastal Waterway, then escorted upstairs to a bedroom with a massage table and oils. Epstein and Robson were both naked during the massage, she said, but when he grabbed her buttocks, she said she didn't want to be touched.

Epstein said he'd pay her to bring him more girls — the younger the better, Robson told police. When she tried once to bring a 23-year-old woman to him, Epstein said she was too old, Robson said.

Robson, who has not been charged in the case, said she eventually brought six girls to Epstein who were paid $200 each time, Robson said. "I'm like a Heidi Fleiss," police quoted her as saying. The girls knew what to expect when they were taken to Epstein's home, Robson said. Give a massage — maybe naked — and allow some touching.

One 14-year-old girl Robson took to meet Epstein led police to start the investigation of him in March 2005. A relative of the girl called to say she thought the child had recently engaged in sex with a Palm Beach man. The girl then got into a fight with a classmate who accused her of being a prostitute, and she couldn't explain why she had $300 in her purse.

The girl gave police this account of her meeting with Epstein:

She accompanied Robson and a second girl to Epstein's house on a Sunday in February 2005. Once there, a woman she thought was Epstein's assistant told the girl to follow her upstairs to a room featuring a mural of a naked woman, several photographs of naked women on a shelf, a hot pink and green sofa and a massage table.

She stripped to her bra and panties and gave him a massage.

Epstein gave the 14-year-old $300 and she and the other girls left, she said. She said Robson told her that Epstein paid her $200 that day.

Other girls told similar stories. In most accounts, Epstein's personal assistant at the time, Sarah Kellen, now 27, escorted the girls to Epstein's bedroom.

Kellen, whose most recent known address is in North Carolina, has not been charged in the case.

Palm Beach police often conducted surveillance of Epstein's home, and at Palm Beach International Airport to see if his private jet was there, so they would know when he was in town. Police also arranged repeatedly to receive his trash from Palm Beach sanitation workers, collecting papers with names and phone numbers, sex toys and female hygiene products.

One note stated that a female could not come over at 7 p.m. because of soccer. Another said a girl had to work Sunday — "Monday after school?" And still another note contained the work hours of a girl, saying she leaves school at 11:30 a.m. and would come over the next day at 10:30 a.m.

Only three months before the police department probe began, Epstein donated $90,000 to the department for the purchase of a firearms simulator, said Jane Struder, town finance director. The purchase was never made. The money was returned to Epstein on Monday, she said.

Staff writers Andrew Marra and Tim O'Meilia and staff researcher Angelica Cortez contributed to this story.

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FD-350 (Rev. 5-8-81)

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(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)
1B, 7B / The Palm Beach Post
West Palm Bech, FL
Date: 7/29/2006
Edition:

Title: Police say lawyer tried to discredit teenage girls.

Character or Classification: 31E-MM-108062
Submitting Office: MM

Indexing:

Police say lawyer tried to discredit teenage girls

By LARRY KELLER
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Famed Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz met with the Palm Beach County State Attorney's Office and provided damaging information about teenage girls who say they gave his client, Palm Beach billionaire Jeffrey Epstein, sexually charged massages, according to police reports.

The reports also state that another Epstein attorney agreed to a plea bargain that would have allowed Epstein to have no criminal record. His current attorney denies this happened.

And the documents also reveal that the father of at least one girl complained that private investigators aggressively followed his car, photographed his home and chased off visitors.

Police also talked to somebody who said she was offered money if she refused to cooperate with the Palm Beach Police Department probe of Epstein.

Epstein: His former attorney agreed to a plea bargain, police say.

The state attorney's office said it presented the Epstein case to a county grand jury this month rather than directly charging Epstein because of concerns about the girls' credibility. The grand jury indicted Epstein, 53, on a single count of felony solicitation of prostitution, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

Police believed there was probable cause to charge Epstein with the more serious crimes of unlawful sex acts with a minor and lewd and lascivious molestation. Police Chief Michael Reiter was so angry that he wrote State Attorney Barry Krischer a memo in May suggesting he disqualify himself from the case.

The case originally was going to be presented to the grand jury in February, but was postponed after Dershowitz produced information gleaned from the Web site myspace.com showing some of the alleged victims commenting on alcohol and marijuana use, according to the police report prepared by Detective Joseph Recarey.

Haley Robson, a 20-year-old Royal Palm Beach woman who told police she recruited girls for Epstein, also is profiled on myspace.com. Her page includes photos of her and her friends, including one

See EPSTEIN, 7B ▶

31E-MM-108062-7

Polygraph shows he didn't know girls' ages, lawyer says

▶ EPSTEIN *from 1B*

using the name "Pimpin' Made EZ." Robson, who was not charged in the case, is a potential prosecution witness.

According to Recarey, prosecutor Lanna Belohlavek offered Epstein attorneys Dershowitz and Guy Fronstin a plea deal in April. Fronstin, after speaking with Epstein, accepted the deal, in which Epstein would plead guilty to one count of aggravated assault with intent to commit a felony, be placed on five years' probation and have no criminal record. The deal also called for Epstein to submit to a psychiatric and sexual evaluation and have no unsupervised visits with minors, according to Recarey's report. The plea bargain was made in connection with only one of the five alleged victims, the report states.

Fronstin — who declined to comment on the case — was subsequently fired and veteran defense attorney Jack Goldberger was hired. He denies there was any agreement by any of Epstein's attorneys to a plea deal.

"We absolutely did not agree to a plea in this case," he said. Neither Belohlavek nor a state attorney's spokesman could be reached for comment.

The parent or parents of alleged victims who complained of being harassed by private investigators provided license tag numbers of two of the men. Police found the vehicles were registered to a private eye in West Palm Beach and another in Jupiter, according to Recarey's report.

"I have no knowledge of it," defense attorney Goldberger said.

The report also says a woman connected to the Epstein case was contacted by somebody who was still in touch with Epstein. That person told her she would be compensated if she didn't cooperate with police, Recarey's report says. Those who did talk "will be dealt with," the woman said she was told. Phone records show the woman talked with the person who allegedly intimidated her around the time she said, Recarey reported.

Phone records also show that the person said to have made the threat then placed a call to Epstein's personal assistant, who in turn called a New York corporation affiliated with Epstein, the report states.

The issue in the Epstein case is not whether females came to his waterfront home, but whether he knew their ages.

"He's never denied girls came to the house," Goldberger said. But when Epstein was given a polygraph test, "he passed on knowledge of age," the attorney said.

After the indictment against Epstein was unsealed this week, Police Chief Reiter referred the matter to the FBI. "We've received the referral, and we're reviewing it," said FBI spokeswoman Judy Orihuela in Miami.

The chief himself has come under attack from Epstein's lawyers and friends in New York, where he has a home. The *New York Post* quoted Epstein's prominent New York lawyer, Gerald Lefcourt, as saying his client was indicted only "because of the craziness of the police chief."

Reiter has declined to comment on the case.

Prosecutors have not presented a sex-related case like Epstein's to a grand jury before, said Mike Edmondson, spokesman for the state attorney's office. "That's what you do with a case that falls into a gray area," he said.

The state attorney's office did not recommend a particular criminal charge on which to indict Epstein, Edmondson said. The grand jury was presented with a list of charges from highest to lowest, then deliberated with the prosecutor out of the room, he said.

"People are surprised at the grand jury proceeding," West Palm Beach defense attorney Richard Tendler said. "It's a way for the prosecutor's office to not take the full responsibility for not filing the (charge), and not doing what the Palm Beach Police Department wanted. I think something fell apart with those underage witnesses."

Defense attorney Robert Gershman was a prosecutor for six years. "Those girls must have been incredible or untrustworthy, I don't know," he said.

Other attorneys said Epstein's case raises the issue of whether wealthy, connected defendants like Epstein — whose friends include former President Clinton and Donald Trump — are treated differently from others. Once he knew he was the subject of a criminal probe, Epstein hired a phalanx of powerful attorneys such as Dershowitz and Lefcourt, who is a past president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

Miami lawyer Roy Black — who became nationally known when he successfully defended William Kennedy Smith on a rape charge in Palm Beach — also was involved at one point.

Said defense attorney Michelle Suskauer: "I think it's unfortunate the public may get the perception that with power, you may be treated differently than the average Joe."

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(Rev. 01-31-2003)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE **Date:** 08/01/2006

To: Miami **Attn:** IMA/PB2

From: Miami
PB2/PBCRA
Contact: SA [redacted] b6 b7C

Approved By: [redacted]

Drafted By: [redacted]

Case ID #: 31E-MM-108062 (Pending)

Title: JEFFREY EPSTEIN;
[redacted]
WSTA - CHILD PROSTITUTION

Synopsis: To request the opening of sub-files in captioned case.

Details: It is requested that the following sub-files be opened to assist in document management in captioned case.

SUB - SBP to capture subpoena request.

SUB - FF to capture forfeiture related materials.

♦♦

213[redacted]01.EC

31E-MM-108062-8

FD-350 (Rev. 5-8-81)

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(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)
20B / The Palm Beach Post
West Palm Beach, FL
Date: 8/4/2006
Edition:

Title: He was over 50
And they were girls

Character
or
Classification: 31E-MM-108062
Submitting Office: MM

He was over 50. And they were girls

If the women whom Palm Beach police say a part-time town resident invited to his home and paid for sex acts were, in fact, *women*, the solicitation charge against Jeffrey Epstein might feel more sufficient. But, according to police records, they weren't. He was over 50. And they were girls.

Elisa Cramer

14.
15.
16.
17-year-old *girls*.

That should count for something — the difference between prostitution and pedophilia.

So, it is baffling that Mr. Epstein, who was indicted last month by a grand jury on one felony count of solicitation of prostitution, has not been charged, as Palm Beach police strenuously urged, with unlawful sex acts with a minor and lewd and lascivious molestation.

Conviction of crimes against minors would mean steeper penalties than the maximum five-year prison term Mr. Epstein faces if convicted of the single count of felony solicitation. It also would help carry a message of intolerance to perverts who prey on girls.

Prosecutors did not pursue charges against Mr. Epstein reflecting the age of the victims because they assumed a jury would view the girls not as victims but as promiscuous, untrustworthy, willing participants. The presumption is offensive.

Mr. Epstein, a 53-year-old Manhattan money manager who has hired Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and defense attorney Jack Goldberger, has denied knowing how old the girls were.

Jury should have decided if Epstein is a pedophile.

But police interviews with five alleged victims and 17 witnesses under oath, as well as phone messages, a high school transcript and other items that police found from searching Mr. Epstein's trash and 7,234-square-foot waterfront home, provide evidence that he knew the girls were teenagers.

One girl couldn't show up when Mr. Epstein wanted because she had soccer. Another time, Mr. Epstein had to wait for his "massage" session because the girl he wanted was still in class.

Why didn't State Attorney Barry Krischer let a jury decide whether to believe the teenagers — including a 16-year-old who went to Mr. Epstein's house to "work" in December 2004 after being asked whether she needed to make money for Christmas gifts?

Prosecutors gave greater weight to the details Mr. Dershowitz provided about the girls in an apparent effort to assail their character. Mr. Dershowitz pointed out to prosecutors that some of the teenagers had talked on myspace.com about marijuana and alcohol use.

The 20-year-old Royal Palm Beach woman who told police she recruited girls for Mr. Epstein has a Web page on myspace.com that features one girl using the name "Pimpin' Made EZ."

Although no charges of witness tampering have been filed, the parents of at least one of the teenage victims complained to police of being followed and intimidated by two men. Police determined that their vehicles were registered to two private investigators. Mr. Goldberger denied knowing anything about it.

Police also note in their reports that the state attorney's office offered Mr. Epstein a plea deal that would have placed him on probation for five years, allowing him ultimately to walk away with no criminal record at all.

I asked Mr. Krischer's spokesman, Mike Edmondson, why the case was referred to a grand jury instead of Mr. Epstein being charged and facing a trial before a jury. And shouldn't the victims' credibility be a factor to determine whether a crime's been committed, not whether a jury will convict? (After all, as Mr. Goldberger told *The Palm Beach Post* of Mr. Epstein, "He's never denied girls came to the house.")

Especially, I asked Mr. Edmondson to explain: Why shouldn't the public look at this case and think there are two kinds of justice — one for the wealthy and one for the rest of us?

Mr. Edmondson said he could not comment on the case because it is active, but on the latter point, he offered, for the sake of "philosophical debate": "Whether wealth buys a different standard of justice across the country ... the answer to that would, of course, be yes."

But in this case, he said, "regardless of the battery of attorneys, the outcome would be the same. Every issue that was debated in public was debated in our office before this case went to the grand jury."

In this case, it is not the victims' credibility but the state attorney's that deserves questioning.

Elisa Cramer is an editorial writer for The Palm Beach Post. *Her e-mail address is elisa_cramer@pbpost.com*

8/4/06
Eg

31E-MM-108062
-9

FD-919 (Rev. 06-05-2003)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE **Date:** 08/08/2006

To: Miami

From: Miami
PB2/Palm Beach County Resident Agency
Contact: [redacted]

b6
b7C

Approved By: [redacted]

Drafted By:

Case ID #: 31E-MM-108062 (Pending)
188B-MM-105207-C (Pending)

Title: VICTIM NOTIFICATION FORM

Synopsis: To document victim information. Please refer to the Victim Notification System for the additional pertinent information on the following victims: [redacted]

Reference: 31E-MM-108062 Serial 1

Details:

VnsCase#: 31E-MM-108062
CAgtName: [redacted]
PContact:
BusName :
BusEIN :
BusAcct :
VicFirN :
VicMidN :
VicLastN:
SSAN :
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Expert: Ignorance of age isn't defense in sex cases

By LARRY KELLER
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Even if Palm Beach money manager Jeffrey Epstein didn't know that girls who police say gave him sexual massages at his Intracoastal home were under the legal age, that alone wouldn't have exempted him from criminal charges of sexual activity with minors.

"Ignorance is not a valid defense," said Bob Dekle, a legal skills professor who was a Lake City prosecutor for nearly 30 years, half of that time specializing in sex crimes against children.

"There is no knowledge element as far as the age is concerned," Dekle said.

After an 11-month investigation, Palm Beach police said there was probable cause to charge Epstein, 53, with unlawful sex acts with a minor and lewd and lascivious molestation. They contend that Epstein — friend of the rich and famous and financial patron of Democratic Party organizations and candidates — committed those acts with five underage girls.

Epstein: Two politicians have returned donations since he was charged with soliciting minors.

In the past week, New York Attorney General and gubernatorial candidate Eliot Spitzer has returned about $50,000 in campaign contributions he received from Epstein, and Mark Green, a candidate to replace Spitzer in

See EPSTEIN, 5B ▶

31E-MM-108062-11

Lawyer: Jurors often believe adults over kids

▶ EPSTEIN *from 1B*

his current job, has returned $10,000 to him because of the Palm Beach scandal, the *New York Daily News* has reported.

Rather than file charges, the state attorney's office presented the case to a county grand jury. The panel indicted Epstein last week on a single, less serious charge of felony solicitation of prostitution.

The case raised eyebrows because the state attorney's office rarely, if ever, kicks such charges to a grand jury. And it increases the difficulty of prosecuting child sex abuse cases, especially when the defendant is enormously wealthy and can hire high-priced, top-tier lawyers.

At least one of Epstein's alleged victims told police he knew she was underage when the two of them got naked for massages and sexual activity. She was 16 years old at the time and said Epstein asked her questions about her high school, according to police reports.

A girl who said she met Epstein when she was 15 said he told her if she told anybody what happened at his house, bad things could happen, the police reports state.

Epstein's youngest alleged victim was 14 when she says she gave him a massage that included some sexual activity. She is now 16. The girl's father says he doesn't know whether she told Epstein her age.

"My daughter has kept a lot of what happened from me because of sheer embarrassment," he said. "But she very much looked 14. Any prudent man would have had second thoughts about that."

Defense attorney Jack Goldberger maintains that not only did Epstein pass a polygraph test showing he did not know the girls were minors, but their stories weren't credible. The state attorney's office also implied that their credibility was an issue when it decided not to charge Epstein directly, but instead give the case to the grand jury.

"A prosecutor has to look at it in a much broader fashion," a state attorney's spokesman said last week.

Epstein hired Harvard law Professor Alan Dershowitz when he became aware he was under investigation, and Dershowitz gave prosecutors information that some of the alleged victims had spoke of using alcohol and marijuana on a popular Web site, according to a Palm Beach police report.

Prosecutors typically consider two things in deciding whether to charge somebody with sex-related offenses against minors — whether there is sufficient evidence and whether there is a public interest in doing so, Dekle said.

Child sex abuse cases often are difficult to prosecute, an attorney says.

If two teens are in a sexual relationship and the boy turns 18 before the girl, he could be charged with a sex crime if the sex continues. There would be no public interest in pursuing that, Dekle said.

But where there is a large gap in ages — and especially in cases of teachers with students — there is a public interest in prosecuting, he said. Likewise if the accused has a track record of sex with minors.

Still there is a "universal constant" in prosecuting these cases, Dekle said. Men who exploit underage children for sex often carefully choose their victims in ways that will minimize the risk to them, he said.

Victims usually are from a lower social status, and they may suffer from psychological problems, Dekle said.

"Lots of child sexual abuse victims have been victimized by multiple people over a period of time. Then the act of abuse produces behavior in the victims that further damages their credibility." Examples include promiscuous behavior and drug abuse.

Some of the alleged victims in the Epstein case returned to his home multiple times for the massage sessions and the $200 to $300 he typically paid them per visit. "That would be a definite problem for the prosecutor," said Betty Resch, who prosecuted crimes against children in Palm Beach County for five years and now is in private practice in Lake Worth.

"The victim becomes less sympathetic" to a jury, Resch said. "But she's a victim nevertheless. She's a kid."

Most men charged with sex crimes against minors look normal, Dekle said. A jury expecting to see a monster seldom will. And the victims' ages work against them and in favor of the defendant in a trial, Dekle said.

If a child and an adult tell different stories and both swear they're telling the truth, adult jurors are more likely to believe the adult, Dekle said.

"You have all these things working against you in a child sex abuse case. Prosecutors normally try to be very careful in filing those cases because they know what they're getting into. There is no such thing as an iron-clad child sexual abuse case."

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Palm Beach chief focus of fire in Epstein case

Defendant's lawyers take him on; he slams state attorney

By LARRY KELLER
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

In the case of Palm Beach financier Jeffrey Epstein, it seems, at times, as if two men are accused of wrongdoing: Epstein and Palm Beach Police Chief Michael Reiter.

Epstein, 53, was indicted last month on a charge of felony solicitation of prostitution solely because of Reiter's "craziness," one of Epstein's lawyers said. His department disseminated "a distorted view of the case" and behaved in a "childish" manner when the grand jury didn't indict Epstein on the charges it sought, another Epstein lawyer complained.

To hear the Epstein camp tell it, Reiter, 48, is a loose cannon better suited to be the sheriff of Mayberry. They whisper that he's embroiled in a messy divorce.

Reiter did in fact file for divorce from his wife, Jill, last year, after 24 years of marriage. They have a son, 18, and a daughter, 14. The couple is scheduled to go to mediation Wednesday. Nothing in the court file suggests their split is particularly ugly.

Reiter incurred the wrath of the Epstein camp as well as the state attor-

See REITER, 7B ▶

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Colleagues cite chief's professionalism, integrity

▶ REITER *from 1B*

ney's office for two reasons. First, he pressed for Epstein to be charged with the more serious crimes of sexual activity with minors. Second, he slammed State Attorney Barry Krischer in blunt language seldom used by one law-enforcement official concerning another because of what he perceived as that office's mishandling of the case.

In a letter to Krischer written May 1, Reiter called his actions in the Epstein case "highly unusual." He added, "I must urge you to . . . consider if good and sufficient reason exists to require your disqualification from the prosecution of these cases."

In short, Reiter told the county's top prosecutor for the past 13 years that he ought to get off the case. "It looks like a departure from professionalism," Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle said of Reiter's letter.

Following Epstein's indictment, Reiter referred the case to the FBI to determine whether the super-rich, super-connected defendant had violated any federal laws.

Reiter won't discuss the case or the broadsides aimed at him. But others almost uniformly use one word to describe the chief: professional.

"I have always been impressed by Mike's professionalism and his leadership," said Rick Lincoln, chief of the Lantana Police Department and a Palm Beach County cop for 32 years.

"The town of Palm Beach has a very professional police department. We all consider Mike to be our peer and a man of integrity."

Reiter: Town Manager Peter Elwell says the Palm Beach police chief's well worth his $144,000 salary.

Juno Beach Police Chief H.C. Clark II agreed. Although he doesn't know Reiter well, he has met with him on countywide law enforcement issues. "I've never seen him lose his cool. I've never seen anything but a professional demeanor from him."

Reiter joined the Palm Beach Police Department in 1981, leaving a $20,000-a-year patrol job at the University of Pittsburgh. His personnel jacket shows consistently excellent job evaluations.

Posh Palm Beach is no hotbed of crime, and in his first year on the job, a resident confined to his home with a sick child thanked Reiter for delivering a few Cokes to the house. Reiter refused payment for the beverages. Another resident thanked Reiter for shutting off his car's headlights in his driveway, saying a valet must have been at fault.

Reiter worked everything from road patrol to organized crime, vice and narcotics. And he's no novice at investigations involving the island's rich and famous. He was the lead detective probing the drug overdose death of David Kennedy in 1984. He also was one of the officers who worked the investigation of William Kennedy Smith, who was charged in 1991 — and later acquitted — with raping a woman at the Kennedy family compound in Palm Beach.

Reiter, who has a master's degree in human resource development from Palm Beach Atlantic University, also has attended the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va., and management courses at Harvard. He's been active in countywide interagency law enforcement organizations and has a "top secret" national security clearance.

"He has a perspective that's broader than just addressing the needs of the town," said Town Manager Peter Elwell, who promoted Reiter from assistant chief to chief in March 2001. Reiter makes more than $144,000 as the town's top cop. Elwell thinks he's worth it.

"He's very businesslike, very straightforward. He's not easily agitated or flamboyant. He's about the work," Elwell said. "I think that his service as chief has been outstanding in five-plus years."

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The man who had everything

Epstein's Palm Beach mansion at 358 El Brillo Way.

Jeffrey Epstein craved big homes, elite friends and, investigators say, underage girls

By ANDREW MARRA, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

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Jeffrey Epstein has donated more than $100,000 to Democratic candidates' campaigns, including John Kerry's presidential bid, the reelection campaign of New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson and the Senate bids of Joe Lieberman, Hillary Clinton, Christopher Dodd and Charles Schumer.

WINGED GARGOYLES guarded the gate at Jeffrey Epstein's Palm Beach mansion. Inside, hidden cameras trolled two rooms, while the girls came and went.

For the police detectives who sifted through the garbage outside and kept records of visitors, it was the lair of a troubling target.

Epstein, one of the most mysterious of the country's mega-rich, was known as much for his secrecy as for his love of fine things: magnificent homes, private jets, beautiful women, friendships with the world's elite.

But at Palm Beach police headquarters, he was becoming known for something else: the regular arrival of teenage girls he hired to give him massages and, police say, perform sexual favors.

Epstein was different from most sexual abuse suspects; he was far more powerful. He counted among his friends former President Bill Clinton, Donald Trump and Prince Andrew, along with some of the most prominent legal, scientific and business minds in the country.

When detectives started

See EPSTEIN, 6A ▶

Epstein's mysterious lifestyle began to unravel after claims of sexual activity with minors.

A life of luxury and secrecy

TINA FINEBERG/The Associated Press

Jeffrey Epstein's Manhattan townhouse dominates a block on the Upper East Side. Thought to be the largest private residence in Manhattan, it is reported to have closed-circuit television and a heated sidewalk to melt fallen snow.

Powerful legal team stymies detectives

Women in his life

Ghislaine Maxwell, a fixture at elite parties and the intensely private daughter of a media tycoon, dated Epstein in the 1990s.

'I'm like a Heidi Fleiss.' [redacted] told police she took at least six girls to visit Epstein, all between the ages of 14 and 16.

PalmBeachPost.com

Read previous stories on the Epstein investigation.

▶ EPSTEIN *from 1A*

asking questions and teenage girls started talking, a wave of legal resistance followed.

If Palm Beach police didn't know quite who Jeffrey Epstein was, they found out soon enough.

Epstein, now 53, was a quintessential man of mystery. He amassed his fortune and friends quietly, always in the background as he navigated New York high society.

When he first attracted notice in the early 1990s, it was on account of the woman he was dating: Ghislaine Maxwell, daughter of the late British media tycoon Robert Maxwell.

In a lengthy article, headlined "The Mystery of Ghislaine Maxwell's Secret Love," the British *Mail on Sunday* tabloid laid out speculative stories that the socialite's beau was a CIA spook, a math teacher, a concert pianist or a corporate headhunter.

"But what is the truth about him?" the newspaper wondered. "Like Maxwell, Epstein is both flamboyant and intensely private."

The media frenzy did not begin in full until a decade later. In September 2002, Epstein was flung into the limelight when he flew Clinton and actors Kevin Spacey and Chris Tucker to Africa on his private jet.

Suddenly everyone wanted to know who Epstein was. *New York* magazine and *Vanity Fair* published lengthy profiles. The *New York Post* listed him as one of the city's most eligible bachelors and began describing him in its gossip columns with adjectives such as "mysterious" and "reclusive."

Although Epstein gave no interviews, the broad strokes of his past started to come into focus.

Building a life of extravagance

He was born blue-collar in 1953, the son of a New York City parks department employee, and raised in Brooklyn's Coney Island neighborhood. He left college without a bachelor's degree but became a math teacher at the prestigious Dalton School in Manhattan.

The story goes that the father of one of Epstein's students was so impressed with the man that he put him in touch with a senior partner at Bear Stearns, the global investment bank and securities firm.

In 1976, Epstein left Dalton for a job at Bear Stearns. By the early 1980s, he had started J. Epstein and Co. That is when he began making his millions in earnest.

Little is known or said about Epstein's business except this: He manages money for the extremely wealthy. He is said to handle accounts only of $1 billion or greater.

It has been estimated he has roughly 15 clients, but their identities are the subject of only speculation. All except for one: Leslie Wexner, founder of The Limited retail chain and a former Palm Beacher who is said to have been a mentor to Epstein.

Wexner sold Epstein one of his most lavish residences: a massive townhouse that dominates a block on Manhattan's Upper East Side. It is reported to have, among its finer features, closed-circuit television and a heated sidewalk to melt away fallen snow.

That townhouse, thought to be the largest private residence in Manhattan, is only a piece of the extravagant world Epstein built over time.

In New Mexico, he constructed a 27,000-square-foot hilltop mansion on a 10,000-acre ranch outside Santa Fe. Many believed it to be the largest home in the state.

In Palm Beach, he bought a waterfront home on El Brillo Way. And he owns a 100-acre private island in the Virgin Islands.

Perhaps as remarkable as his lavish homes is his extensive network of friends and associates at the highest echelons of power. This includes not only socialites but also business tycoons, media moguls, politicians, royalty and Nobel Prize-winning scientists whose research he often funds.

"Just like other people collect art, he collects scientists," said Martin Nowak, who directs the Program for Evolutionary Dynamics at Harvard University and was reportedly the recipient of a $30 million research donation from Epstein.

Epstein is said to have befriended former Harvard President Larry Summers, prominent law Professor Alan Dershowitz, Donald Trump and *New York Daily News* Publisher Mort Zuckerman.

And yet he managed for decades to maintain a low profile. He avoids eating out and was rarely photographed.

"The odd thing is I never met him," said Dominick Dunne, the famous chronicler of the trials and tribulations of the very rich. "I wasn't even aware of him," except for a *Vanity Fair* article.

Epstein's friendship with Clinton has attracted the most attention.

Epstein met Clinton as early as 1995, when he paid tens of thousands of dollars to join him at an intimate fund-raising dinner in Palm Beach. But from all appearances, they did not become close friends until after Clinton left the Oval Office and moved to New York.

Epstein has donated more than $100,000 to Democratic candidates' campaigns, including John Kerry's presidential bid, the reelection campaign of New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson and the Senate bids of Joe Lieberman, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Christopher Dodd and Charles Schumer.

Powerful friends and enemies

A *Vanity Fair* profile found cracks in the veneer of Epstein's life story. The 2003 article said he left Bear Stearns in the wake of a federal probe and a possible Securities and Exchange Commission violation. It also pointed out that Citibank once sued him for defaulting on a $20 million loan.

The article suggested that one of his business mentors and previous employers was Steven Hoffenberg, now serving a prison term after "bilking investors out of more than $450 million in one of the largest Ponzi schemes in American history."

As he amassed his wealth, Epstein made enemies in disputes both large and small. He sued the man who in 1990 sold him his multimillion-dollar Palm Beach home over a dispute about less than $16,000 in furnishings.

former friend claimed Epstein backed out of a promise to reimburse him hundreds of thousands of dollars after their failed investment in Texas oil wells. A judge decided Epstein owed him nothing.

"It's a bad memory. I would rather not have ever met Jeffrey Epstein," said Michael Stroll, the retired former president of Williams Electronics and Sega Corp. "Suffice it to say I have nothing good to say about him."

Among the characteristics most attributed to Epstein is a penchant for women.

He has been linked to Maxwell, a fixture on the high-society party circuits in both New York and London. Previous girlfriends are said to include a former Ms. Sweden and a Romanian model.

"He's a lot of fun to be with," Donald Trump told *New York* magazine in 2002. "It is even said that he likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side. No doubt about it, Jeffrey enjoys his social life."

Investigation leads to Epstein

Although he was not a frequenter of the Palm Beach social scene, he made his presence felt. Among his charitable donations, he gave $90,000 to the Palm Beach Police Department and $100,000 to Ballet Florida.

In Palm Beach, he lived in luxury. Three black Mercedes sat in his garage, alongside a green Harley-Davidson. His jet waited at a hangar at Palm Beach International Airport. At home, a private chef and a small staff stood at the ready. From a window in his mansion, he could look out on the Intracoastal Waterway and the West Palm Beach skyline. He seemed to be a man who had everything.

But extraordinary wealth can fuel extraordinary desires.

In March 2005, a worried mother contacted Palm Beach police. She said another parent had overheard a conversation between their children.

Now the mother was afraid her 14-year-old daughter had been molested by a man on the island.

The phone call triggered an extensive investigation, one that would lead detectives to Epstein but leave them frustrated.

Palm Beach police and the state attorney's office have declined to discuss the case. But a Palm Beach police report detailing the criminal probe offers a window into what detectives faced as they sought to close in on Epstein.

Detectives interviewed the girl, who told them a friend had invited her to a rich man's house to perform a massage. She said the friend told her to say she was 18 if asked. At the house, she said she was paid $300 after stripping to her panties and massaging the man while he masturbated.

Police interview 5 alleged victims

The investigation began in full after the girl identified Epstein in a photo as the man who had paid her. Police arranged for garbage trucks to set aside Epstein's trash so police could sift through it. They set up a video camera to record the comings and goings at his home. They monitored an airport hangar for signs of his private jet's arrivals and departures.

They quickly learned that the woman who took the 14-year-old girl to Epstein's house was Haley Robson, a Palm Beach Community College student from Loxahatchee. In a sworn statement at police headquarters, Robson, then 18, admitted she had taken at least six girls to visit Epstein, all between the ages of 14 and 16. Epstein paid her for each visit, she said.

During the drive back to her house, Robson told detectives, "I'm like a Heidi Fleiss."

Police interviewed five alleged victims and 17 witnesses. Their report shows some of the girls said they had been instructed to have sex with another woman in front of Epstein, and one said she had direct intercourse with him.

In October, police searched the Palm Beach mansion. They discovered photos of naked, young-looking females, just as several of the girls had described in interviews. Hidden cameras were found in the garage area and inside a clock on Epstein's desk, alongside a girl's high school transcript.

Two of Epstein's former employees told investigators that young-looking girls showed up to perform massages two or three times a day when Epstein was in town.

They said the girls were permitted many indulgences. A chef cooked for them. Workers gave them rides and handed out hundreds of dollars at a time.

One employee told detectives he was told to send a dozen roses to one teenage girl after a high school drama performance. Others were given rental cars. One, according to police, received a $200 Christmas bonus.

The cops moved to cement their case. But as they tried to tighten the noose, they encountered other forces at work.

In Orlando they interviewed a possible victim who told them nothing inappropriate had happened between her and Epstein. They asked her whether she had spoken to anyone else. She said yes, a private investigator had asked her the same questions.

When they subpoenaed one of Epstein's former employees, he told them the same thing. He and a private eye had met at a restaurant days earlier to go over what the man would tell investigators.

Detectives received complaints that private eyes were posing as police officers. When they told Epstein's local attorney, Guy Fronstin, he said the investigators worked for Roy Black, the high-powered Miami lawyer who has defended the likes of Rush Limbaugh and William Kennedy Smith.

While the private eyes were conducting a parallel investigation, Dershowitz, the Harvard law professor, traveled to West Palm Beach with information about the girls. From their own profiles on the popular Web site MySpace.com, he obtained copies of their discussions about their use of alcohol and marijuana.

He took his research to a meeting with prosecutors in early 2006, where he sought to cast doubt on the teens' reliability.

The private eyes had dug up

enough dirt on the girls to make prosecutors skeptical. Not only did some of the girls have issues with drugs or alcohol but also some had criminal records and other troubles, Epstein's legal team claimed. And at least one of them, they said, lied when she told police she was younger than 18 when she started performing massages for Epstein.

After the meeting, prosecutors postponed their decision to take the case to a grand jury.

In the following weeks, police received complaints that two of the victims or their families had been harassed or threatened. Epstein's legal team maintains that its private investigators did nothing illegal or unethical during their research.

By then, relations between police and prosecutors were fraying. At a key meeting with prosecutors and the defense, Detective Joseph Recarey, the lead investigator, was a no-show, according to Epstein's attorney.

"The embarrassment on the prosecutor's face was evident when the police officer never showed up for the meeting," attorney Jack Goldberger said.

Later in April, Recarey walked into a prosecutor's office at the state attorney's office and learned the case was taking an unexpected turn.

The prosecutor, Lanna Belohlavek, told Recarey the state attorney's office had offered Epstein a plea deal that would not require him to serve jail time or receive a felony conviction.

Recarey told her he disapproved of the plea offer.

The deal never came to pass, however.

Future unclear after charge

On May 1, the department asked prosecutors to approve warrants to arrest Epstein on four counts of unlawful sexual activity with a minor and to charge his personal assistant, Sarah Kellen, now 27, for her alleged role in arranging the visits. Police officials also wanted to charge Robson, the self-described Heidi Fleiss, with lewd and lascivious acts.

By then, the department was frustrated with the way the state attorney's office had handled the case. On the same day the warrants were requested, Palm Beach Police Chief Michael Reiter wrote a letter to State Attorney Barry Krischer suggesting he disqualify himself from the case if he would not act.

Two weeks later, Recarey was told that prosecutors had decided once again to take the case to the grand jury.

It is not known how many of the girls testified before the grand jury. But Epstein's defense team said one girl who was subpoenaed — the one who said she had sexual intercourse with Epstein — never showed up.

The grand jury's indictment was handed down in July. It was not the one the police department had wanted.

Instead of being slapped with a charge of unlawful sexual activity with a minor, Epstein was charged with one count of felony solicitation of prostitution, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison. He was booked into the Palm Beach County Jail early July 23 and released hours later.

Epstein's legal team "doesn't dispute that he had girls over for massages," Goldberger said. But he said their claims that they had sexual encounters with him lack credibility.

"They are incapable of being believed," he said. "They had criminal records. They had accusations of theft made against them by their employers. There was evidence of drug use by some of them."

What remains for Epstein is yet to be seen.

The Palm Beach Police Department has asked the FBI to investigate the case. It also has returned the $90,000 Epstein donated in 2004.

In New York, candidates for governor and state attorney general have vowed to return a total of at least $60,000 in campaign contributions from Epstein. Meanwhile, Epstein's powerful friends have remained silent as tabloids and Internet blogs feast on the public details of the police investigation.

Goldberger maintains Epstein's innocence but says the legal team has not ruled out a future plea deal. He insists Epstein will emerge in the end with his reputation untarnished.

"He will recover from this," he said.

Staff writer Larry Keller and staff researchers Bridget Bulger, Angelica Cortez, Amy Hanaway and Melanie Mena contributed to this story.

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Epstein camp calls female accusers liars

By LARRY KELLER
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Attorneys and publicists for Palm Beach financier Jeffrey Epstein went on the offensive Monday, contending that teenage girls who have accused Epstein of sexual shenanigans at his waterfront home are liars and saying that the Palm Beach Police Department is "childish."

"There never was any sex between Jeffrey Epstein and any underage women," his lead attorney, Jack Goldberger, said from Idaho where he was vacationing with his family.

Epstein

Epstein did have young women come to his house to give him massages, Goldberger said. "Mr. Epstein absolutely insisted anybody who came to his house be over the age of 18. How he verified that, I don't know. The question is, did anything illegal occur. The law was not violated here."

He had no explanation as to why Epstein would pay girls or women with no massage training — as the alleged victims said was the case — $200 to $300 for their visits. "The credibility of these witnesses has been seriously questioned," Goldberger said.

Epstein, 53, was indicted by a county grand jury last month on a charge of felony solicitation of prostitution. After an 11-month investigation that included sifting through Epstein's trash and surveilling his home, Palm Beach police concluded there was enough evidence to charge him with sexual activity with minors. When the grand jury indicted Epstein on the less serious charge, Police Chief Michael Reiter referred the case to the FBI to determine whether there were federal law violations.

After a spate of stories about the case last week, New York publicist Dan Klores — whose client list has included Paris Hilton and Jennifer Lopez — said on Saturday that Epstein's camp was ready "to get their story out."

See EPSTEIN, 9B ▶

'Mr. Epstein absolutely insisted anybody who came to his house be over the age of 18.'
JACK GOLDBERGER, Epstein's lead attorney

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Attorney: Police gave media 'distorted view'

▶ EPSTEIN *from 1B*

They did that Monday via Goldberger and a Los Angeles publicist for Miami criminal defense attorney Roy Black, who also has represented Epstein in the case.

"We just think there has been a distorted view of this case in the media presented by the Palm Beach police," Goldberger said.

Reiter has consistently declined to comment on the case and did not respond to a request for comment Monday.

The implication that State Attorney Barry Krischer was easy on Epstein by presenting the case to a grand jury rather than filing charges directly against him is wrong, Goldberger said.

The Palm Beach Police Department was "happy and ecstatic" that the panel was going to review the evidence. "I think what happened is they weren't happy with the result. They decided to use the press to embarrass Mr. Epstein."

But records show that Reiter wrote Krischer on May 1 — well before the case went to the grand jury — suggesting that Krischer "consider if good and sufficient reason exists to require your disqualification from the prosecution of these cases."

Rather than flat-out decline to charge Epstein, Krischer referred the case to the grand jury to "appease" the chief, Goldberger said.

A state attorney's spokesman would say only that the office refers cases to the grand jury when there are issues with the viability of the evidence or witnesses' credibility.

Both the state attorney and the grand jury concluded there was not sufficient evidence that Epstein had sex with minors, according to Goldberger. "It was just a childish performance by the Palm Beach Police Department," Goldberger said.

The defense attorney said one of the alleged victims who claimed she was a minor was in fact over the age of 18. Another alleged victim who was subpoenaed to testify to the grand jury failed to do so. Epstein's accusers, he added, have histories of drug abuse and thefts. "These women are liars. We've established that."

But why would they all invent their stories about meeting Epstein for sexual massages?

"I don't have an answer as to what was the motivation for these women to come forward and make these allegations," Goldberger said.

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Epstein investigation

Read a letter from Palm Beach Police Chief Michael Reiter to State Attorney Barry Krischer on the Epstein probe.

PalmBeachPost.com

(Rev. 01-31-2003)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE **Date:** 09/13/2006

To: Miami **Attn:** SSA [redacted]
Miami-FIG SIA

From: Miami
Squad PB-2, PBCRA
Contact: SA [redacted]

Approved By: [redacted]

Drafted By: [redacted]

Case ID #: 31E-MM-108062 (Pending)

Title: JEFFREY EPSTEIN;
[redacted]
WSTA - CHILD PROSTITUTION

b6
b7C

Synopsis: To request analytical assistance regarding telephone toll records.

Enclosure(s): 1) A CDrom containing Cingular telephone toll records for [redacted], cellular telephone [redacted]
2) Hard copies of [redacted] Cingular telephone toll records from the dates of March 2005 to December 2005. (not included on CDrom.
2) A list of all identified (561) area code telephone numbers, primarily those of the underage victims.

Details: An ongoing federal investigation has revealed that [redacted]

Enclosed for analytical review are the 2004 and 2005 cellular toll records for [redacted], cellular number [redacted] It is requested to ascertain [redacted] over the two year period. The primary focus should be on the identification and

261[redacted]01.ec
31E-MM-108062-17

frequency of the (561) area code numbers listed on [redacted] toll records. b6 b7C

Please contact SA [redacted] at [redacted] should any further information be needed.

♦♦

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018938

(Rev. 01-31-2003)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE **Date:** 09/14/2006

To: Miami

From: Miami
PB-2/West Palm Beach RA
Contact: SA [redacted]

b6
b7C

Approved By: [redacted]

Drafted By: [redacted]

Case ID #: [redacted] (Pending Inactive) b7A
9A-MM-106548 (Pending)
9B-MM-106812 (Pending)
31E-MM-106675 (Pending)
31E-MM-107146 (Pending)
31C-MM-107200 (Pending)
62D-MM-107021 (Pending)
164C-MM-107620 (Pending)
305C-MM-106925 (Pending)
305C-MM-107468 (Pending)
305D-MM-106828 (Pending)
305D-MM-107072 (Pending)

Title: Case update.

Synopsis: Delayed Investigation.

Details: For information of the file, investigation in this matter has been delayed due to writer's assignment to a kidnaping investigation (7A-MM-107268) since 1/17/2006.

♦♦

62D-MM-107021-2

FD-350 (Rev. 5-8-81)

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Billionaire faces charge of solicitation of minors

MONDAY: Palm Beach billionaire Jeffrey Epstein paid to have underage girls and young women brought to his home, where he received massages and sometimes sex, according to an investigation by the Palm Beach Police Department. An indictment was unsealed that charged Epstein, 53, with one count of felony solicitation of prostitution, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison. He was released on $3,000 bond. Epstein's attorney, Jack Goldberger, said his client, a money manager for the wealthy, committed no crimes and passed a lie detector test in which he said he did not know the girls were minors.

Epstein

(Indicate page, name of newspaper, city and state.)

Date: 07/30/2006
Edition: PALM BEACH POST

Title: BILLIONAIRE FACES CHARGE OF SOLICITATION OF MINORS

Character: 31E-MM-108062
or
Classification:
Submitting Office:

Indexing:

b6
b7C

31E - MM - 108062 - 18

(Rev. 01-31-2003)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE **Date:** 09/18/2006

To: [redacted] **Attn:** Crimes Against Children
SSA [redacted]
Squad C-20

b6
b7C

From: Miami
PB2/PBCRA
Contact: SA [redacted]

Approved By: [redacted]

Drafted By: [redacted]

Case ID #: 31E-MM-108062 (Pending)

Title: JEFFREY EPSTEIN;
[redacted]
WSTA - CHILD PROSTITUTION

Synopsis: To set lead for captioned investigation.

Enclosure(s): One Grand Jury Subpoena for [redacted]

b3

Details: On 07/24/2006 the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Palm Beach County Resident Agency (PBCRA), opened an investigation involving multi-millionaire Jeffery Epstein and captioned subjects. The investigation involves [redacted]. In addition to Palm Beach, Epstein maintains residences in New York, U.S. Virgin Islands and New Mexico.

b6
b7C

Epstein was born 01/20/1953 and raised in Coney Island. He graduated from Lafayette High School in Brooklyn. The investigation has revealed that he took some classes in physics at Cooper Union from 1969 to 1971. He left Cooper Union in 1971 and attended NYU's Courant Institute, where he took courses in mathematical physiology of the heart, leaving that school too, without a degree. Between 1973 and 1975, Epstein taught calculus and physics at the Dalton School in Manhattan. In 1976, Epstein left Dalton for a job at Bear Stearns, a global investment bank and securities firm.

b6
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261[redacted]01.EC 31E-MM-108062-19

To: [redacted] From: Miami
Re: 31E-MM-108062, 09/18/2006

FBI Miami, PBCRA, request [redacted] b3

Any questions or concerns contact SA [redacted] Miami Division, PBCRA, [redacted] b6 b7C

Epstein's biographical information is the following:

Name	Jeffrey E. Epstein
DOB	01/20/1953
SSAN	[redacted]-3348
Hair	Grey
Eyes	Blue
Height	6'0
Weight	175 lbs

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018942

To: [redacted] From: Miami
Re: 31E-MM-108062, 09/18/2006

LEAD(s):

Set Lead 1: (Action)

[redacted] b3

It is requested that FBI [redacted]. In addition, if needed, serve the enclosed subpoena.

♦♦

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018943

Automated Serial Permanent Charge-Out
FD-5a (1-5-94)

Date: 06/21/07 Time: 14:03

Case ID: 31E-MM-108062 Serial: 20

Description of Document:

Type : OTHER
Date : 09/21/06
To : [redacted] b3
From : US DIST COURT
Topic: EXECUTED FGJ SUBPOENA

Reason for Permanent Charge-Out:

transfer to subpoena sub

Transferred to:

Case ID: 31E-MM-108062-SBP Serial: 62

Employee: [redacted] b6 b7C

31E-MM-108062-20

(Rev. 01-31-2003)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE **Date:** 10/17/2006

To: Miami **Attn:** SA [redacted]
PB2/PBCRA

b6
b7C

From: [redacted]
Squad C-20
Contact: SA [redacted]

Approved By: [redacted]

Drafted By: [redacted]

Case ID #: 31E-MM-108062 (Pending) -25

Title: JEFFREY EPSTEIN;
[redacted]
WSTA- CHILD PROSTITUTION

Synopsis: Lead covered for captioned investigation; Grand Jury subpoena served [redacted] b3

Reference: 31E-MM-108062 Serial 19

Enclosure(s): Enclosed for Miami is the server copy of the referenced Grand Jury subpoena issued by the United States District Court, Southern District of Florida on 10/06/2006 and served [redacted] on 10/16/2006.

Details: On 10/16/2006, SA [redacted] received from SA [redacted], via Federal Express delivery service, the referenced Grand Jury subpoena. On that date, SA [redacted] and SA [redacted] went to [redacted] b3 b6 b7C

[redacted] accepted service of the Grand Jury subpoena, the Appearance Notice, the Certification of Business Records and Appendix A, (Document Inventory). [redacted] then contact SA [redacted] at the telephone number provided on the Grand Jury subpoena. [redacted] was directed to do so prior to 10/20/2006, and was told that if she did not provide the records described in

31E-MM-108062-25

b3

the subpoena, she would be required to appear at the United States District Courthouse located at 701 Clematis Street, West Palm Beach, Florida.

At this time, no further action will be taken by the [redacted] in this matter. Lead is covered.

♦♦

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018946

United States District Court

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

TO: [redacted]

b3

SUBPOENA TO TESTIFY BEFORE GRAND JURY

FGJ 05-02(WPB)-Fri./No. OLY-19

SUBPOENA FOR:

[ ] **PERSON** [X] **DOCUMENTS OR OBJECT[S].**

YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED to appear and testify before the Grand Jury of the United States District Court at the place, date and time specified below.

PLACE:	ROOM:
United States District Courthouse 701 Clematis Street West Palm Beach, Florida 33401	Room 4-A
	DATE AND TIME: October 20, 2006 9:00am

YOU ARE ALSO COMMANDED to bring with you the following document(s) or object(s):

[redacted]

b3

Please coordinate your compliance of this subpoena and confirm the date and time of your appearance with Special Agent [redacted], Federal Bureau of Investigation, Telephone: [redacted]

This subpoena shall remain in effect until you are granted leave to depart by the court or by an officer acting on behalf of the court.

CLERK	DATE:
(BY) DEPUTY CLERK	October 6, 2006

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b7C

This subpoena is issued upon application of the United States of America

Name, Address and Phone Number of Assistant U.S. Attorney
[redacted] Assistant U.S. Attorney
500 So. Australian Avenue, Suite 400
West Palm Beach, FL 33401-6235
Tel: [redacted]
Fax: (561) 802-1787

*If not applicable, enter "none."

To be used in lieu of AO110

FORM ORD-227
JAN.86

U.S. Departm of Justice

United States Attorney
Southern District of Florida

500 S. Australian Ave., Suite 400
West Palm Beach, FL 33401-6235
(561) 820-8711

APPEARANCE NOTICE

The attached subpoena requires the production of the records specified to a Federal Grand Jury/Trial in the Southern District of Florida.

A new provision of the Federal Rules of Evidence provides that routine business records may be admitted at trial through the declaration of a custodian, if they are provided sufficiently in advance of trial to allow an opportunity for any challenges to their authenticity. Therefore, you may be able to avoid appearing personally at the grand jury/trial at the time and place specified by completely filling out the attached Certification and Inventory and immediately returning it with the records to **Special Agent** [redacted] **FBI** at the following address:

Federal Bureau of Investigation
505 South Flagler Drive, Ste. 500
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401-5923

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b7C

EARLY VOLUNTARY TURNOVER

Please note that we are requesting an early voluntary turnover of the materials subpoenaed. The early voluntary turnover date is prior to October 20, 2006.

Sincerely,

R. ALEXANDER ACOSTA
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

BY: [redacted]
ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

CERTIFICATION OF BUSINESS RECORDS

I, the undersigned,_____, declare that I am: employed by/associated with _____ in the position of_____ and by reason of my position am authorized and qualified to make this declaration.

In my employment with the above-named bank/company I am familiar with the business records it maintains. The above-named bank/company maintains records of its business which are:

1. made at or near the time of the occurrence of the matters set forth therein, by, or from information transmitted by, a person with knowledge of those matters;
2. kept in the course of regularly conducted business activity; and
3. made by the regularly conducted activity as a regular practice.

Among the records so maintained are the attached records itemized in Appendix A, Inventory of Documents.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date of execution: _____

Place of execution: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX A

DOCUMENT INVENTORY

The documents submitted are as follows:

Signature of Records Custodian:

(Rev. 01-31-2003)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE **Date:** 11/14/2006

To: [redacted] **Attn:** SSA [redacted] RA

Attn: SSA [redacted] RA

b6
b7C

From: Miami
PB2/PBCRA
Contact: SA [redacted]

Approved By: [redacted]

Drafted By: [redacted]

Case ID #: 31E-MM-108062 (Pending)

Title: JEFFREY EPSTEIN;
[redacted]
WSTA - CHILD PROSTITUTION

b6
b7C

Synopsis: To request travel reference captioned case.

Administrative: Reference telcall between SA [redacted] and SSA [redacted] and SSA [redacted] on 11/14/2006.

Details: On 07/24/2006 the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Palm Beach County Resident Agency (PBCRA), opened an investigation involving multi-millionaire Jeffery Epstein and captioned subjects. The investigation involves [redacted]

FBI Miami, PBCRA, request travel concurrence with FBI [redacted]

b6
b7C

b6
b7C

229 [redacted] 01.ec 31E-MM-108062-32

To: [redacted] From: Miami
Re: 31E-MM-108062, 11/14/2006

LEAD(s):

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b7C

Set Lead 1: (Info)

[redacted]

AT [redacted]

FBI Miami request travel concurrence from FBI [redacted] to conduct victim interview.

Set Lead 2: (Info)

[redacted]

AT [redacted]

FBI Miami request travel concurrence from FBI [redacted] [redacted] to conduct victim interview.

♦♦

HOUSE_OVERSIGHT_018952

(Rev. 01-31-2003)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE **Date:** 11/09/2006

To: Miami

From: Miami
PB2/West Palm Beach RA
Contact: SA [redacted]

Approved By: [redacted]

Drafted By: [redacted]

Case ID #: 31E-MM-108062 - 33

Title: JEFFREY EPSTEIN; [redacted]
WSTA - CHILD PROSTITUTION

b6
b7C

Synopsis: Request that SA [redacted] with SOC# [redacted] receive holiday pay on November 10, 2006, Veteran's Day, a Federal Holiday.

Details: SA [redacted] will be working on gathering data for the Intelligent Analyst that will be coming to the Palm Beach RA on Monday.

♦♦

313[redacted]03.ec

31E-MM-108062-33

Case No. . . . . : 1-05-000368
SPECIAL NOTES : DO NOT RELEASE
Occur From Date: 1/27/05 0000
Occur To Date : 1/27/05 0000
Report Date . : 3/14/05 1600
Day Of Week . : Thursday
Common/Location: 358 EL BRILLO WY
City . . . . . : PALM BEACH, FL
Location Type : RESIDENCE-SINGLE FAMILY
Beat Assignment: DETECTIVE BUREAU
Map Reference : 10
Dept Class . . : SEXUAL BATTERY
Report Officer : [redacted]
Case Status . : OPEN / ACTIVE
Case Status Dt : 3/14/05
Supervisory Dt.: [redacted] 3/14/05 b6
Entry Date . . : 4/06/05 b7C
Names? . . . . . :
Property? . . :
Vehicles? . . :
Offenses? . . :
Narrative? . . :
Related Cases? :

********* V E H I C L E I N F O R M A T I O N # 1 **********

Case number . : 1-05-000368
Category . . . :
State Veh Type :
Year . . . . . : 0
Make . . . . . :
Model . . . . :
Model Name . . :
Permit Number :
Style . . . . . :
Color - Top . :
Color - Bottom :
License # . . :
VIN . . . . . :
Stolen value . : 0
Disposition . :
Insured . . . :
Insured by . . :
Keys in car . :
Vehicle locked :
Lein holder . :
Date recovered : 0/00/00
Recovery value : 0
Street number :
City . . . . . :
Recovery code :
NCIC number . :
Be On Look Out?:

********* P E R S O N R E P O R T I N G I N F O - # 1 *********

Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Last Name . . : [redacted]
Street Number : [redacted]
City . . . . . :
Birth Date/Age : [redacted]
Employer? . . :
Occupation . . :
Oper Lic No. . : [redacted]
Home Phone No. :
Race . . . . . : White
Sex . . . . . :
Height . . . . : 0
Weight . . . . : 0
Other Phone Nbr:

********** S U S P E C T / A R R E S T E E I N F O R M A T I O N - # 1 **

Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Prompt valid in: [redacted]
Street Number : [redacted]
City . . . . . :
Birth Date . . : [redacted]
Maximum Age . : [redacted]
Employer? . . :
Occupation . . :
Oper Lic No. . : [redacted]
Home Phone No. :
Other Phone Nbr:
Race . . . . . : White
Sex . . . . . : Female
Minimum Height : 0
Minimum Weight : 0
Maximum Height : 0

3IE - MM - 108062 - 37

Case No. . . . . : 1-05-000368 (Continued)

Maximum Weight :	0	Misc. ID# . . :	
Aliases? . . . :		MO/Crime Spec? :	
Hair Color . . :		Hair Length . :	
Hair Style . . :		Eye Color . . :	
Glasses . . . :		Complexion . . :	
Facial Hair . :		Build . . . . :	
Teeth . . . . :		Speech . . . . :	
Hat . . . . . :		Coat . . . . . :	
Shirt . . . . :		Pants . . . . :	
Shoes . . . . :		Body Marks #1 :	
Body Marks #2 :		Body Marks #3 :	
Body Marks #4 :		Status . . . . :	STILL SUSPECT b6
Arrest Case No.:		Additional UCR?:	b7C

********** S U S P E C T / A R R E S T E E I N F O R M A T I O N - # 2 **

Case Number . :	1-05-000368	Prompt valid in:	[redacted]
Street Number :	358 EL BRILLO WY		
City . . . . . :	PALM BEACH, FL 000033480		
Birth Date . . :	[redacted]	Maximum Age . :	25
Employer? . . :		Occupation . . :	PERSONAL ASST/EPSTEIN
Oper Lic No. . :		Home Phone No. :	561/000-0000
Other Phone Nbr:		Race . . . . . :	White
Sex . . . . . :	Female	Minimum Height :	0
Minimum Weight :	0	Maximum Height :	0
Maximum Weight :	0	Misc. ID# . . :	
Aliases? . . . :		MO/Crime Spec? :	
Hair Color . . :		Hair Length . :	
Hair Style . . :		Eye Color . . :	
Glasses . . . :		Complexion . . :	
Facial Hair . :		Build . . . . :	
Teeth . . . . :		Speech . . . . :	
Hat . . . . . :		Coat . . . . . :	
Shirt . . . . :		Pants . . . . :	
Shoes . . . . :		Body Marks #1 :	
Body Marks #2 :		Body Marks #3 :	
Body Marks #4 :		Status . . . . :	STILL SUSPECT
Arrest Case No.:		Additional UCR?:	

********** S U S P E C T / A R R E S T E E I N F O R M A T I O N - # 3 **

Case Number . :	1-05-000368	Prompt valid in:	EPSTEIN, JEFFREY
Street Number :	358 EL BRILLO WY		
City . . . . . :	PALM BEACH, FL 000033480		
Birth Date . . :	1/20/1953 52	Maximum Age . :	52
Employer? . . :		Occupation . . :	
Oper Lic No. . :	E123425530200 FL	Home Phone No. :	
Other Phone Nbr:		Race . . . . . :	White
Sex . . . . . :	Male	Minimum Height :	0
Minimum Weight :	0	Maximum Height :	0
Maximum Weight :	0	Misc. ID# . . :	
Aliases? . . . :		MO/Crime Spec? :	
Hair Color . . :		Hair Length . :	
Hair Style . . :		Eye Color . . :	

Case No. . . . . : 1-05-000368 (Continued)

Glasses . . . :		Complexion . . . :	
~~Facial Hair . :~~		~~Build . . . . . :~~	
Teeth . . . . . :		Speech . . . . . :	
Hat . . . . . :		Coat . . . . . :	
Shirt . . . . . :		Pants . . . . . :	
Shoes . . . . . :		Body Marks #1 :	
Body Marks #2 :		Body Marks #3 :	
Body Marks #4 :		Status . . . . . :	STILL SUSPECT
Arrest Case No.:		Additional UCR?:	

b6
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********** V I C T I M I N F O R M A T I O N - # 1 **********

3/E-MM-108062-37

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b6
b7C

b6
b7c

Case No. . . . . : 1-05-000368
Can Identify . :
Injury Extent :
Injury Type 2 :
Med Treatment :
Phys Last Name :

(Continued)

Victim Sobriety:
Injury Type 1 :
Hospital ID . :
Phys First Name:

********* O T H E R P E R S O N I N F O R M A T I O N - # 1 *********

Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Street Number : [redacted]
City . . . . . :
Birth Date/Age : [redacted]
Occupation . . . : STUDENT
Home Phone No. : [redacted]
Sex . . . . . : Female
Weight . . . . . : 0
Other Phone Nbr:

Last Name . . . : [redacted]
Employer? . . . :
Oper Lic No. . :
Race . . . . . : White
Height . . . . . : 0
Person Type . : OTHER PERSON

b6
b7C

********* O T H E R P E R S O N I N F O R M A T I O N - # 2 *********

Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Street Number : [redacted]
City . . . . . :
Birth Date/Age : [redacted]
Occupation . . :
Home Phone No. :
Sex . . . . . : Female
Weight . . . . . : 0
Other Phone Nbr:

Last Name . . . : [redacted]
Employer? . . . :
Oper Lic No. . : [redacted]
Race . . . . . : White
Height . . . . . : 510
Person Type . : OTHER PERSON

b6
b7C

********* O T H E R P E R S O N I N F O R M A T I O N - # 3 *********

Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Street Number : [redacted]
City . . . . . :
Birth Date/Age : [redacted]
Occupation . . :
Home Phone No. :
Sex . . . . . : Female
Weight . . . . . : 0
Other Phone Nbr: [redacted]

Last Name . . . : [redacted]
Employer? . . . :
Oper Lic No. . :
Race . . . . . : White
Height . . . . . : 0
Person Type . : OTHER PERSON

******** O T H E R P E R S O N I N F O R M A T I O N - # 4 *********

Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Street Number : [redacted]
City . . . . . :
Birth Date/Age : [redacted]
Occupation . . :
Home Phone No. :
Sex . . . . . : Male
Weight . . . . . : 0
Other Phone Nbr:

Last Name . . . : [redacted]
Employer? . . . :
Oper Lic No. . :
Race . . . . . : White
Height . . . . . : 0
Person Type . : OTHER PERSON

******** O T H E R P E R S O N I N F O R M A T I O N - # 5 *********

Case Number . : 1-05-000368

Last Name . . . : [redacted]

Case No. . . . . : 1-05-000368
Street Number :
City . . . . . :
Birth Date/Age : 0/00/0000 0
Occupation . . : FAMILY THERAPIST
Home Phone No. : 561/000-0000
Sex . . . . . : Female
Weight . . . . : 0
Other Phone Nbr: 561/000-0000

(Continued)

Employer? . . :
Oper Lic No. . :
Race . . . . . : White
Height . . . . : 0
Person Type . : OTHER PERSON

EMPLOYER INFORMATION
Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Employer Name : PBC DIVISON OF YOUTH AFFAIRS
Address . . . : 4200 N AUSTRALIAN AV
City/State/Zip : WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33407
Phone Number . : 561/840-4540

********* O T H E R P E R S O N I N F O R M A T I O N - # 6 *********
Case Number . :
Street Number :
City . . . . . :
Birth Date/Age :
Occupation . . :
Home Phone No. :
Sex . . . . . :
Weight . . . . : 0
Other Phone Nbr:

Last Name . . : [redacted]

b6
b7C

Employer? . . :
Oper Lic No. . :
Race . . . . . : White
Height . . . . : 0
Person Type . : OTHER PERSON

EMPLOYER INFORMATION
Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Address . . . :
City/State/Zip :
Phone Number . :

Employer Name : [redacted]

********* O T H E R P E R S O N I N F O R M A T I O N - # 7 *********
Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Street Number :
City . . . . . :
Birth Date/Age : 0/00/0000 0
Occupation . . :
Home Phone No. :
Sex . . . . . :
Weight . . . . : 0
Other Phone Nbr:

Last Name . . : [redacted]

Employer? . . :
Oper Lic No. . :
Race . . . . . : White
Height . . . . : 0
Person Type . : OTHER PERSON

b6
b7C

********* O T H E R P E R S O N I N F O R M A T I O N - # 8 *********
Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Street Number :
City . . . . . :
Birth Date/Age : 0/00/0000 0
Occupation . . :
Home Phone No. :
Sex . . . . . :

Last Name . . : [redacted]

Employer? . . :
Oper Lic No. . :
Race . . . . . :
Height . . . . : 0

Case No. . . . . : 1-05-000368 (Continued)
Weight . . . . . : 0 Person Type . : OTHER PERSON
Other Phone Nbr:

********* O T H E R P E R S O N I N F O R M A T I O N - # 9 *********

Case Number . : 1-05-000368
Street Number : [redacted]
City . . . . . :
Birth Date/Age : [redacted]
Occupation . . :
Home Phone No. :
Sex . . . . . :
Weight . . . . . : 0
Other Phone Nbr: 561/000-0000

Last Name . . . : [redacted]
Employer? . . . :
Oper Lic No. . : [redacted]
Race . . . . . : White
Height . . . . . : 0
Person Type . : OTHER PERSON

b6
b7C

********** N A R R A T I V E # 1 **********

Original Report LO Reported By: PAGAN, MICHELE D. 9/20/05
Entered By.: OREGERO, LAURA D. 9/20/05

On 03/14/2005, I received a call from a woman who did not wish to identify herself (later identified as [redacted]. She stated that her fourteen year old step daughter (later identified as [redacted] possibly may have been molested in Palm Beach by a wealthy man. According to [redacted] she learned of the possible molestation by a third party. She explained that she had received a call from the mother of her stepdaughter's friend. The mother claimed to have overheard a conversation between her daughter and a male friend; they were talking about [redacted] The conversation was about how [redacted] had met with a 45-year-old man and had sex with him and was paid for it. I advised [redacted] that I would like to meet with her to obtain a more detailed statement and facts. [redacted] stated she did not know what to do and had to discuss the matter with her husband. At this point [redacted] did not provide me with a call back number or any other information. She stated that she would contact me once she had spoken with her husband and [redacted] mother.

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On 03/14/2005 received a call from [redacted] They stated it was all right to speak to their daughter [redacted] via cell phone [redacted] Her mother [redacted] had been made aware of the case. They agreed to meet me at the police department later this date. [redacted].

On 03/14/2005, [redacted] accompanied by his wife [redacted] came to the Palm Beach Police Department where they advised me that they believed their fourteen year old daughter may have had some type of sexual relationship with an older male who resided in Palm Beach. Neither knew the suspect's name or address. Both stated that their daughter did not talk to them about the incident, nor would she admit to it.

* [redacted] identified his daughter as [redacted] w/f, [redacted] resides with her biological mother [redacted] at [redacted] is a twin,

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her sister [redacted] resides with [redacted] Both [redacted] and [redacted] are currently attending [redacted] school, which is an involuntary admitted juvenile educational facility. [redacted] stays at the facility during the week and comes home on the weekend. According to [redacted] she was admitted to the school because of disciplinary problems that recently escalated. The facility also coordinates with the families to provide one on one as well as family counseling.

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According to [redacted] she believes the incident occurred on Sunday, Feb 6, 2005. A friend of [redacted] named [redacted] picked her up at their house and left. They believe [redacted] initiated the relationship with the older gentleman, though they do not have any proof. [redacted] lives close by with her mother. [redacted] further explained that [redacted] was introduced to [redacted] by [redacted] a boy she was dating (goes to [redacted] plays baseball). [redacted] continued that on Sunday, [redacted] picked up [redacted] and drove to Palm Beach where they met the man. Supposedly, the man has a lot of money and often has young girls come over to his house. Haley offers these girls a way to make fast cash. The man starts with a massage. If he likes them, he keeps them around and does more. The [redacted] did not have any information on [redacted] other than she lives on [redacted] the last house on right side (north side).

[redacted] talked of a conversation that she had with [redacted] the mother of [redacted] a former friend of [redacted] She found it strange that they were no longer friends until she received the call from her mother telling her of the conversation she overheard between [redacted] and a boy named [redacted].

[redacted] told me of an incident that occurred on 02/09/2005. [redacted] got into a fight at school [redacted] Assistant Principal, found over $300.00 in [redacted] purse. [redacted] gave different explanations for the large sum of money. Initially the school administration thought it was drug related but then dismissed the claim. Since that day, [redacted] did not return to school; she ran away Thursday, 02/10th or Friday 02/11 and returned to her mother's house later that night after midnight. It was not until after [redacted] received the call from [redacted] mother, [redacted] that she learned [redacted] was the girl that got into the fight with [redacted] The fight was instigated when [redacted] accused [redacted] of being a prostitute.

[redacted] who has legal joint custody of his daughter [redacted] signed the affidavit of prosecution indicating he wished to prosecute against the inappropriate sexual behavior with his fourteen-year-old daughter.

[redacted] stated that he had no objections with our agency speaking with his daughter [redacted] about the incident. [redacted] stated that [redacted] mother [redacted] is aware of the allegations and also was willing to cooperate. According to [redacted] she does not believe her daughter had any additional contact with the suspect as she was with

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her mother and then placed into [redacted].

I contacted the School Board Police who provided me the information for [redacted] West Palm Beach, Florida. Checking the school board records for [redacted] there was no disciplinary record found. I was advised if no disciplinary action was taken for a fight, such as an expulsion or detention, the incident may not have been recorded. This was at the discretion of the individual school security and principal. b6 b7C

03/15/2005, I called the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office and left a message for PBSP Sgt. Chris Keen, Child Abuse Unit.

On 03/15/2005, I went to [redacted] where I met with white female [redacted] Also present was [redacted] therapist. During an audiotaped interview, I spoke with [redacted] about the allegations that were made. [redacted] initially denied anything had happened, only admitting to going with [redacted] (later identified as [redacted]) to Palm Beach to pick up money [redacted] was owed. [redacted] identified [redacted] as the cousin of her former boyfriend [redacted] She ultimately admitted to knowing that [redacted] worked for a wealthy man and possibly did sexual favors for him. She also admitted that [redacted] had offered her an opportunity to make money.

[redacted] identified [redacted] boss as a white male named "Jeff" who lived in Palm Beach (later positively identified as Jeffrey Epstein). [redacted] explained that she was first approached by [redacted] to go with her to Jeff's house, when they were at [redacted] house. According to [redacted] she was not sure exactly what was going on with [redacted] but agreed to go with her. [redacted] boyfriend) became angry when he heard [redacted] inviting [redacted] to accompany her. [redacted] believed it was to pick up money the man owed [redacted]. [redacted] stated [redacted] told her that she would pick her up at her house on Sunday. [redacted] was not sure of the exact dates but knew it was a Sunday. According to [redacted], [redacted] along with an unknown, possibly Hispanic female, picked her up at her father's house on [redacted] told her father that they were going shopping. It was later confirmed by [redacted] that [redacted] picked his daughter up. According to Mr. [redacted], [redacted] drove a pick up truck.

[redacted] drove [redacted] along with the unknown female to Palm Beach. Sometime on the way there, a conversation occurred between [redacted] and [redacted] whereby [redacted] told [redacted] that if Jeff asked her [redacted] age, she should say she was eighteen.

[redacted] recalled that Jeff's house was on a dead end street. All three girls walked up a driveway, past what appeared to be a small guard/security room. In fact, [redacted] recalled a male approaching them asking what they wanted. [redacted] stated they were there to see Jeff. The male allowed them to continue walking up to the house.

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[redacted] stated the man told them that Epstein was not there but was expected back. He allowed them to enter the house, via the kitchen. He offered them something to drink while they waited inside. Shortly after, Epstein and a woman, described as white with blond hair entered the kitchen. [redacted] believed the woman was Epstein's Assistant. [redacted] added that the woman did not seem friendly and kept her responses short and direct. Epstein introduced himself to [redacted] as Jeff . [redacted] got the impression that Epstein and [redacted] friend knew each other. [redacted] described Epstein as being approximately forty-five years old, a long face, and bushy eyebrows, with graying hair. b6 b7C

[redacted] and Epstein left the kitchen leaving [redacted] and [redacted] friend alone in the kitchen. They returned a short time later. They all spoke briefly in the kitchen. While speaking to me, [redacted] became upset and started to cry. [redacted] stated the woman instructed her to follow her upstairs, which she did. According to [redacted], the woman led her to a room that had a massage table in it. The woman started to fix up the room, putting the covers on the table and taking lotions out. She then told [redacted] that Epstein would be up in a second. The woman left the room, and soon after, Epstein walked in and told [redacted] to take off her clothes. As [redacted] was telling me what had happened, she looked away from me, and with a pointed finger, repeatedly pressed it into her thigh. [redacted] stated he was stern when he told her to take off her clothes. [redacted] said she did not know what to do as she was the only one there. [redacted] took off her shirt leaving her bra on. Epstein, dressed in a towel told her to take off everything. [redacted] stated she removed her pants leaving her thong panties on. Epstein then instructed her to give him a massage pointing to a specific lotion for her to use. Epstein laid on the table, face down. As [redacted] began to give Epstein the massage, he told her to get on his back. [redacted] stated she straddled herself on Epstein's back. [redacted] stated her exposed buttocks were touching Epstein s bare buttocks. As [redacted] was giving Epstein the massage, he turned around, and wacked off [redacted] later explained that wacking off was masturbating). [redacted] stated she was disgusted by Epstein's actions but did not say anything. According to [redacted] Epstein told her that she "had a really hot body." Epstein excused himself and went to the bathroom where she believed he masturbated again. Epstein returned to the room and told [redacted] that he was done and gave her three hundred dollars. They went back down stairs where they met [redacted]. Epstein said good-bye and they left. [redacted] asked [redacted] how did it go and asked what did she [redacted] do. When [redacted] told [redacted] that Epstein asked for a massage, [redacted] allegedly stated "I know." [redacted] stated they then went shopping. [redacted] stated [redacted] also got paid, but that she did not know why since she was confident that [redacted] did not do anything.

[redacted] described Epstein's house as a two story pink house with a Cadillac Escalade parked in the driveway. There were gates leading into the property. From the kitchen, [redacted] recalled walking up a flight of stairs, lined with photographs, to a room. Upon entering

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the room there was a large bathroom to the right. [redacted] recalled a hot pink and green sofa in the room. There was a door on each side of the sofa. [redacted] recalled there being a mural of a naked woman in the room, as well as several photographs of naked women on a shelf. b6 b7C

[redacted] stated Epstein did not change in front of her but did take off his towel, exposing himself. [redacted] recalled Epstein being hairy especially on his chest. Epstein also had a hairline that continued to his buttocks. [redacted] admitted to seeing his penis. I asked [redacted] if she knew what being circumcised meant and she stated no. [redacted] then said that she thought Epstein was on steroids because he was a "really built guy and his wee wee was very tiny." [redacted] would explain that when she stated "wee wee" she meant penis. [redacted] stated Epstein exposed himself when he took his towel off, placing it on the floor as he laid down on the table.

[redacted] said Epstein was specific in his instruction to her on how to massage, telling her to go clockwise, etc. [redacted] recalled that Epstein got up from the table and went to the bathroom where she heard him making, what she believed to be sexual type of noises. (moaning) He then returned to the room where he again laid down on the table. Epstein then turned over and instructed [redacted] to massage his boobs. As she did this, Epstein continued to make moaning noises.

[redacted] resumed massaging his chest area. [redacted] was now standing on the ground. Epstein turned to his side, and with the towel on the ground started to rub his penis in an up and down motion. [redacted] stated Epstein held on to the small of her back as she massaged his chest, back and shoulder area. [redacted] recalled Epstein ejaculating because he had to use the towel to wipe himself as he got off the table. [redacted] also recalled Epstein having a noticeable freckle on his chest.

Epstein then left the room and [redacted] got dressed. She went back downstairs where she met Haley and the unknown white female. [redacted] admitted to getting paid three hundred dollars in cash from Epstein. Before they left, Epstein asked [redacted] to leave her phone number. As they were leaving the house, [redacted] asked [redacted] what had happened and how much she was paid. [redacted] stated [redacted] seemed upset or jealous when she told her that she received three hundred dollars. [redacted] stated received only two hundred dollars that day. [redacted] stated that she believed [redacted] was paid two hundred dollars for bringing her.

[redacted] told [redacted] that if they do this every Saturday, they could be rich; [redacted] agreed. They then went shopping, though she is not sure where. Possibly at TJ Maxx or Marshall's. [redacted] stated she never saw [redacted] again as she got into a fight at school. She had not spoken with [redacted] either as her mother took away her cell phone.

I asked [redacted] if she was aware of any video equipment while she was in the room. She stated no.

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[redacted] stated she was afraid that [redacted] would retaliate against her or her family if she ever went to the police regarding the incident. b6 b7C [redacted] stated that her father's vehicle was recently vandalized. [redacted] admitted to telling [redacted] what had happened with Epstein. According to [redacted] became angry and upset, punching a hole in the wall. [redacted] guessed that it was [redacted] who told [redacted] about the incident, and now there were rumors in school about [redacted] and what she did with Epstein.

I then talked to [redacted] about truth and lying. We talked about the color sweater she was wearing. [redacted] denied having sexual intercourse with Epstein. She denied touching his penis. [redacted] again admitted to observing Epstein masturbate.

[redacted] agreed to cooperating with the police department in placing a phone call to [redacted] in a controlled setting. I met with [redacted] and advised her of the families' as well as [redacted] willingness to cooperate with this investigation. Copies of this interview were placed into evidence.

I made contact with [redacted] mother of [redacted] I advised her briefly of my investigation. She was aware of the incident and stated that she overheard a portion of a conversation that her daughter was having with a boy named [redacted] stated that it was her opinion that both girls liked [redacted] recalled hearing her daughter calling [redacted] a whore. [redacted] admitted that she did not listen to the entire conversation but did confront her daughter about it later. [redacted] told her mother that something to the effect that [redacted] had slept with an older man for money. [redacted] stated that she would not object to me speaking with her daughter. It was [redacted] belief that everyone in the school may have known about this because of the fight that her daughter [redacted] and [redacted] had gotten into. I reminded [redacted] that this was an ongoing investigation and requested she not discuss the fact that I had contacted her. She agreed.

On 03/16/2005, PBSO Sgt. Chris Keen left a message that he was returning my call. I spoke with Keen and discussed the case with him and inquired if he had any open allegations or cases where the suspect resided in Palm Beach. Keen stated he was unaware of any. Keen offered any assistance if needed. Keen stated it was his experience that due to the age of the parties involved, it would be difficult to interview them and expect the investigation to remain confidential.

Because of the time delay, there was no need for the victim to be taken to a medical facility for a physical for the purpose of obtaining evidence. There was also no need to take her to CPT as she was already in a juvenile facility, with an assigned therapist, in which coordinating a day and time to obtain a statement could be made.

On 03/17/2005, I queried Jeffery Epstein on the internet and obtained

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a photo of Epstein to be used in a photo line up. I met with [redacted] b6
[redacted] at which time she viewed the photo line up. She immediately b7C
recognized Epstein and pointed to him (Position #5). [redacted] signed the photo line up under Epstein's picture. This signed line up was placed into evidence.

On 03/18/2005, I met with [redacted] at her residence for the purpose of placing a controlled call to [redacted]. [redacted] spoke with [redacted] and asked if she could arrange another meeting with Jeff. [redacted] stated that she would have to call him and make the arrangements. A copy of this conversation was placed into evidence.

03/19/2005, I spoke with [redacted] and [redacted] and was advised that [redacted] left the state to visit with her aunt and uncle. [redacted] is scheduled to return to Florida on 03/27/2005

03/21/2005, I coordinated with PB BSF Unit and OCVAN to initiate surveillance on 358 El Brillo.

03/21/2005, Coordinated with Det. Lee regarding trash pulls from 358 El Brillo. On this same date I called [redacted] to schedule an appointment to speak with [redacted]. She stated the school guidance counselor was reluctant to have police presence at the school. I assured her that I would respond to the school in civilian clothes and an unmarked vehicle.

[redacted] called me back and advised that I did not need to make an appointment to see [redacted].

I received a return phone call from [redacted] stating that [redacted] [redacted] would be attending the family therapy sessions with [redacted].

I received messages from [redacted]

I conducted a computer query on Epstein. The results of this query indicated the most recent driver's license on file for Epstein was for the state of Florida, which had expired.

A cross reference of Epstein s residence, 358 El Brillo, Palm Beach, revealed the following affiliated names: [redacted] w/f, dob [redacted] Mark L. Epstein, w/m dob [redacted] & Ghislaine N. Maxwell, uk/f, dob [redacted] A computer query for both returned no history.

On 03/23/2005, I spoke with [redacted] cell phone wk [redacted]. I requested that she not discuss the incident with anyone including her daughter [redacted] as I did not want the investigation compromised. I was told at this time, that [redacted] and [redacted] have not been getting along due to the fact that [redacted] has decided to continue living with her father.

On 03/29/2005, I placed telephone calls to both the [redacted] and [redacted] residences requesting to speak with them regarding the

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investigation. I received return phone calls from [redacted] and [redacted] and advised them that I would be contacting [redacted] family therapist to coordinate a time to meet with [redacted]. This was at the request of both Back and [redacted] that [redacted] strict classroom and therapy schedule be disrupted as little as possible. I also updated them to the investigation thus far. Both [redacted] and [redacted] stated they had no objection to my meeting with [redacted] In speaking with [redacted] she identified the cell phone number of [redacted] as being the phone assigned to [redacted] Ms. [redacted] had no objections and provided consent to giving it to the police department for the use of placing controlled phone calls from it. [redacted] stated the phone had been taken away from [redacted] as part of her punishment for not doing well in school. According to [redacted] used to be an excellent student, but in the past two months has become irritable, verbally abusive to the family and has run away. [redacted] stated her daughter's recent behavior is the opposite of what she normally is. [redacted] stated they are going through family therapy sessions with the school but none of this had come up. Arrangements were made for Det. Captain Gudger to retrieve the cell phone from [redacted] at her place of employment.

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I called [redacted] and requested to speak with [redacted]. Upon speaking with [redacted] she advised me that she was in the middle of therapy sessions and would call me back once the sessions were completed. [redacted] stated the sessions should be concluded by 7:00 PM. At approximately 8:00PM I had called [redacted] at which time I left a message on her voice mail requesting a return phone call. I spoke with [redacted] and advised her that I did not meet with her daughter and that I would again attempt to coordinate a time with the counselor so as not to disrupt [redacted] school schedule. [redacted] had no objections. Shortly after speaking with [redacted] I received a call from [redacted]. I explained the situation and requested a time to meet with [redacted] Back reviewed [redacted] schedule and advised that [redacted] would be available after 3:00PM.

On 03/30/2005, I met with [redacted] and [redacted] at [redacted]. I reminded [redacted] of her conversation with [redacted] During this time [redacted] initiated a conversation with me in which she admitted that she was not telling me everything that had happened during the time she was alone with Epstein. According to [redacted], while she and Epstein were alone on the second floor, Epstein used a purple vibrator to massage her vaginal area. [redacted] stated there was no penetration as the vibrator was on top of her underwear. I asked [redacted] if Epstein ever asked her age and she stated he had. [redacted] stated she told him she was eighteen. When Epstein asked what school she was in, [redacted] responded she was in the twelfth grade at [redacted]. During the course of this incident, [redacted] stated Epstein told her that [redacted] had worked for him for years.

We then continued with the controlled call to [redacted]. At approximately 3:35pm [redacted] from her cell phone, made a call to [redacted] s home, [redacted]. [redacted] was not home. [redacted] was told

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that [redacted] was at working a double and could be reached on her cell phone, [redacted]. W/F, [redacted] is employed at The Olive Garden Restaurant, located on Forest Hills Blvd in Wellington.

[redacted] called [redacted]. During the conversation between [redacted] and [redacted], [redacted] asked [redacted], what happened, stating that she had heard rumors that [redacted] was going to press charges. [redacted] asked if they, meaning [redacted] parents, knew about Jeffery. [redacted] claimed to have heard that [redacted] father had found out about Jeffrey. [redacted] told [redacted] that they (her parents) did not know anything about Epstein. [redacted] told [redacted] that Epstein needed someone to work tomorrow and asked if she was available. [redacted] stated she would call Epstein and then call [redacted] back.

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During the course of these conversations with [redacted] she would at times appear to be articulate and well spoken. She would then start to act in an immature manner, by looking around, not paying attention, drawing on a paper. [redacted] would offer me a high five whenever she claimed to have told me the truth in the details of the afternoon at Epstein's house. [redacted] would sit in the chair, with her knees propped up to her chest as she admitted that she did not tell me the all the details of her encounter with Epstein during our first meeting. As a means of positive reinforcement I would high five [redacted]

On 03/31/2005, subpoena requests for T-Mobile Wireless [redacted] and Cingular Wireless, [redacted]. ([redacted] and [redacted] phone numbers) were drafted.

On 04/01/2005, I met with members of PB BSF Unit for the purpose of conducting surveillance on 358 El Brillo. Cross-reference supplement.

On 04/01/2005, I met with Det. Krauel of the Palm Beach Police Department who provided me a copy of the concealed weapons permit for Mr. Epstein. It revealed Epstein had a valid permit. There was no current photo attached to the renewal notice.

On this same date I queried various different web sites for a possible identification of the purple item retrieved from the trash pull from 358 El Brillo. The item was similar in description as the one described by [redacted] and used by Epstein.

I made contact with Spicygear.com and spoke with the owner John. I emailed a photograph of the item for his opinion. He identified the items as a Jelly Anal Wand of some sort. The item is easily available at sex shops in South Florida.

04/06/2005, I conducted business queries into Epstein utilizing the internet. I located articles relating to financial reports. There was no local history.

On 04/01/2005 - 04/03/2005, with the assistance of BSF, there was

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continued surveillance on the property.

On 04/04/2005, I obtained a copy of voice mail messages, dated 03/31 and 04/01 from [redacted] to [redacted] A female identifying herself as [redacted] states that she could pick [redacted] up to take her to Epstein's house for an eleven o clock appointment. A copy of this was placed into evidence. b6 b7C

On 04/05/2005, a trash pull was conducted at 358 El Brillo by Det. Lee and me. There were several messages written on various forms of papers. There was a message from [redacted] indicating [redacted] 11:00. The following was additional information obtained from trash retrieved from 358 El Brillo: Jean Luc 6:20 AM; David [redacted] [redacted] 1x; fuliias Friday 5:30PM; [redacted] ; a message receipt dated 4/4 1:05- [redacted] She is looking to speak to you .; [redacted]

On 04/06/2005, I faxed subpoena requests to SA Mighdolls office for Epstein, [redacted] and [redacted] s phone records. (Phone numbers [redacted]

On 04/06/2005, I called [redacted], ext [redacted], and spoke with Principal [redacted]. He confirmed that they had a student by the name of [redacted] He requested a written request prior to releasing any additional information. On this same date I faxed [redacted] a request for student and parent information on [redacted] I advised [redacted] that due to this being an open investigation he was not to discuss the matter with anyone.

On 04/08/2005, I received a message from [redacted] providing me the following information: [redacted] Florida, [redacted]. Parents name: [redacted]

Det. Lee provided me with trash obtained from 358 El Brillo for 04/06 04/07/05. The following information was retrieved: Jet Aviation 800-538-0724 itinerary, indicating a departure date of 04/05/2005 at 4:00 PM with an arrival in New York City of 6:15PM. Flight crew captain David Rodgers, co-captain, Larry Visoski, flight engineer Larry Morrison. Call sign N908JE; a note stating Bye J. thank you [redacted], hand written notes & messages 11- [redacted], 12:30 chicken, [redacted] 4, 3 September B & J, Big Screen x8, [redacted] work Sunday @ 4PM, [redacted] Monday after school?; left message for [redacted] [redacted] works 4-9 Monday and Tuesday, leaves school @ 11:30 AM; [redacted] will be here tomorrow @ 10:30 Am; Mrs. Business 654-6699 [redacted] There was no trash for 04/08/05.

04/22/05 received the results of a subpoena request from Bellsouth for [redacted] The results only provided subscriber information. I contacted Alice Grant Investigative Subpoena Compliance Center who stated the request was not complete and the results would be sent to

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me as soon as the query was finished.

Cross-referencing the names [redacted] as well as phone numbers, which were obtained from message notes via trash pulls, I identified the before mentioned individuals as being acquainted with someone at 358 El Brillo. [redacted] are both above the legal age of consent. b6 b7C

On 05/03/2005, I spoke with [redacted] and updated her on the investigation. [redacted] stated that [redacted] was doing well in the school. Her contact with the outside is limited as they do not have access to the phones. [redacted] comes home on the weekends and she is not allowed to go anywhere alone.

On 05/11/2005, I made arrangements to meet with [redacted] and [redacted].

On Thursday, 05/12/05, I spoke with [redacted] regarding the case. They will be moving to GA in July 2005. They will be very busy over the next few weeks but would be available via phone. Will coordinate a date to meet to discuss the matter further.

During this week I conducted surveillance at Epstein s residence and at the airport, but there was nothing to indicate that Epstein was in town.

Due to conflicting appointments, rescheduled until 06/02/2005, to meet with [redacted]

I also spoke with [redacted] and updated her to the investigation.

On 06/02/2005, I met with [redacted] advised that she could be reached via her cell phone until she is able to provide me with her new contact information.

I also received a message from [redacted] Attempted call back but the line was busy.

June 14, 2005, I received information that Epstein's plane was at Jet Aviation. I spoke with Det. Lee regarding surveillance.

I called the Olive Garden and asked for [redacted]. I was advised she was not working today. This would indicate that [redacted] was still employed there.

On 07/07/2005, I faxed subpoena requests to SA Mighdolls office for Epstein, [redacted] and [redacted] phone records. (Phone numbers [redacted], [redacted]. The original subpoena requests only provided subscriber and billing information.

On 07/20/2005, conducted a trash pull arranged by Ofc. Lee. Inside there were misc. papers with phone numbers and names. There were

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misc. female hygiene products in the trash. Based on a prior Auto Track report done on 358 El Brillo, a possible subject residing at the residence is [redacted]. [redacted] fit the description provided by officers who had conducted surveillance in the area of a female seen entering and leaving the residence.

On 07/21/05, I received the Duces Tecum dated 07/18/05, which was clerked by ASO

On 07/26/2005, I received the results of Bell South Subpoena.

On 08/04/05, I received DHL Express from T mobile with the results of the query.

I spoke with [redacted] who confirmed that [redacted] was still living out of state. It appeared that all was going well.

I left a message for [redacted]

On 08/08/2005, I received the results of Cingular cell phone subpoena.

During the week of 09/08/2005, I checked 358 El Brillo and the Palm Beach International Airport but there was no direct indication that Epstein was in town.

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On 09/08/2005, I reviewed the case notes of this file, as the case will be turned over to Det. Recarey.

On 09/11/2005, while on patrol, I conducted a check at Epstein's residence and found that it still had the hurricane shutters on. On a drive by the Palm Beach International Airport later that afternoon, I did not observe Epstein's plane.

On 09/14/2005, I conducted a check at the Palm Beach International Airport but did not see Epstein s plane.

On 09/19/2005, I spoke with [redacted] to keep her updated and to find out if there was any change of address or phone numbers for [redacted] I was told no. I left a message for [redacted] in order to provide her with Detective Recarey s information.

********** N A R R A T I V E # 2 **********

NA Reported By: RECAREY, JOSEPH 9/21/05
Entered By.: ALTOMARO, NICKIE A. 9/21/05

On September 19, 2005, I met with Officer Pagan and received the information pertaining to this case. Members of the Burglary Strike Force had previously been conducting surveillance on both Epstein and [redacted]. Officer Munyan was assigned to monitor the Epstein home and Sgt Sorge and Officer Minot were assigned to monitor [redacted]. Both teams provided a surveillance log that will be placed into the

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attachment file.

Det. Dawson was assigned to relieve Officer Munyan at 4:00 pm; he informed me that at approximately 8:00 pm, Epstein had left for the airport and his private jet was sitting on the tarmac. Epstein's private vehicle drove to the jet and unloaded packages into the jet. It appeared that Epstein left the county at this time. Surveillance will continue to determine when Epstein will return.

Inv Continues.

********** N A R R A T I V E # 3 **********

NA Reported By: PARKINSON, GREGORY A. 9/23/05
Entered By.: ALTOMARO, NICKIE A. 9/23/05

On Friday, September 23, 2005 at approximately 1:45 p.m., I began to copy a tape micro cassette, under case number 05-368 and property number 05-243, tape number 1. I placed the tape in the telex copy-et, series 2 machine and began to go through the copying process. Approximately 1/2 through the tape, the tape wrapped around the spindle and became locked and stretched the tape. I examined it and determined that it was in the best interest to leave it as it is as a prior copy had been made and turned over to Sergeant Frick. I immediately took the tape to Sergeant Frick and allowed him to examine it and then obtained the copy from him and Detective Recarey and brought the copy of the tape down and made a copy for him based on that. The tape was placed back in the original container and is retained in the evidence bag under the previously mentioned property number of 05-243. It is not advisable to attempt to copy this tape as further damage could result to the recorded material and there is an existing copy anyway.

********** N A R R A T I V E # 4 **********

NA Reported By: PARKINSON, GREGORY A. 9/26/05
Entered By.: ALTOMARO, NICKIE A. 9/26/05

On 3-24-05 at 11:00 pm, a copy of tape 2 (case number 05-294) had been made for Det. Pagan by Evidence Specialist Annette Badger. The copy was turned over to Detective Recarey.

On Friday, 09-23-05 at approimately 2:15 pm, I was in the process of reproducing audio tapes (micro and standard) to standard size when it was discovered, in the test review process, that tape number 2 was blank. I notified Sgt. Frick and Det. Recarey. I was informed that they had a prior copy and I could use it to make a master tape. I did so and when reviewing and signing the evidence sheet, I noticed Evidence Specialist Badger had written "#2 is blank."

I obtained that copy from Det. Recarey and made a new copy on a standard size tape. The new copy was placed in the evidence bag under